

Local Roads Communication Analysis

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Final Report

Prepared by Opinion Dynamics Corporation and
Siddall, Inc.

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Disclaimer Page

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16. Abstract The report studies the effectiveness of various outreach strategies with local units of government in the State of Wisconsin. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation prepared an outreach campaign in 2001 for a new state statute requiring local communities to biennially rate the condition of their roadways and provide the data to the state. The outreach campaign, which resulted in an initial compliance rate of 99%, was used as a case study for the research effort. The study design contained qualitative and quantitative research methods including interviews with local officials and a telephone/Internet survey questionnaire. Over 56% of all communities in Wisconsin responded to the questionnaire. The research provides an assessment of the past outreach campaign on pavement ratings and offers communication strategies for future pavement rating efforts. The study also provides the Wisconsin Department of Transportation with valuable insight into future outreach opportunities and challenges when working with local units of government in the state.			
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Background and Objectives

In 2001 WisDOT implemented an outreach initiative to enhance awareness, knowledge, and compliance with a new statute -- State Statute 86.302(2). This statute required all localities in Wisconsin to rate the conditions of their local roads annually and to submit these ratings to WisDOT. This communications initiative targeted diverse audiences, including towns, villages, cities and counties, and utilized multiple communications vehicles.

Compliance with the regulation exceeded the expectations of those involved with the design and implementation of the program. Over 99% of all municipalities complied with the statute, despite the fact that there was neither a direct incentive for individual municipalities to comply, nor a penalty for non-compliance. While many officials considered the program a success, there was little knowledge of the specific aspects of the outreach program that led to the success of the program, making it difficult to apply the lessons of this program to other outreach efforts by the Department.

The research reported in this document assesses the outcomes of the outreach program and determines the success of the program in reaching its audiences and convincing them to comply with the new roads rating requirement. The report also provides information and recommendations for future communications efforts on this and other topics.

This research was designed to determine the effectiveness of communication tactics, particularly in regard to different audiences in relation to the outreach effort prepared for State Statute 86.302(2). Specifically, the research was designed to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of various communication strategies in developing awareness, credibility, need, technical expertise and follow through
- Determine which factors and related communication tools were most important for motivating local governments to comply
- Identify which strategies were least effective, the barriers that impeded success, and potential solutions
- Determine how various campaign elements were perceived by the target audiences
- Develop a communication plan to share the project results department-wide
- Develop an implementation plan to adopt recommendations as WisDOT business practices
- Develop matrices that analyze the effectiveness of the communication tools upon the different audiences

Methodology

In order to meet the objectives established for this research, a three-phase research program was put into place:

- Phase I: Audit of existing materials
- Phase II: Exploratory interviews
- Phase III: Confirmatory Research

In Phase I, the research team met with the WisDOT project manager and other team members and reviewed project materials provided by WisDOT. This information provided important background about the project and guided the development of the next two phases of the research.

In Phase II, qualitative interviews were conducted with a variety of individuals, including key stakeholders for the local roads rating project, and WisDOT employees and officials who serve a variety of roles. The majority of interviews were conducted in-person. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone. Interviews with stakeholders addressed issues about the project, including rationale and understanding of its development, project perceptions of localities, identification and understanding of problems, and perceptions and insights about why the program was successful. Interviews with WisDOT employees and officials not involved in the local roads rating project focused on communications efforts in general. The findings from these interviews provided the foundation for the third phase of the research, as well as many of the recommendations contained in this report.

In Phase III of this research program, the findings and observations from the qualitative research were examined through a statewide quantitative survey of municipalities. The results of this survey are documented in this report.

All municipalities in Wisconsin, including cities, towns, villages, and counties, were encouraged to participate in a letter mailed by WisDOT. Municipalities were given the following options for participation:

- Mail** - A hard copy of the survey was included with the letter. Municipalities were given the option of mailing the completed survey to Opinion Dynamics for tabulation.
- Fax** – A fax number was provided for municipalities choosing this option.
- Internet** – The letter also contained an Internet address where respondents could complete the survey on-line. Opinion Dynamics also e-mailed an invitation to participate, containing a link to the survey, to e-mail addresses provided by WisDOT.
- Telephone** – Municipalities were provided with a toll-free number to call in order to complete the survey by telephone; few municipalities took advantage of this option. Finally, Opinion Dynamics made a series of telephone calls to municipalities who had not responded to the mail survey, to complete the survey by telephone.

In order to participate in the survey, respondents had to either be involved in the decision to comply for their municipality, decide how resources would be allocated for their municipality, or be involved in the rating itself. In some cases, more than one individual responded from a given municipality. The initial goal was to interview at least one respondent from 500 different municipalities. This goal was exceeded. A total of 1,208 respondents participated in the survey, from approximately 1091 different municipalities. Their responses form the basis of this report.

A special effort was made to contact specific municipalities, including the counties and cities with the largest populations, and those municipalities that did not comply with the initial regulation. In addition to the initial letter and e-mail invitation, several telephone calls were made to each of these municipalities that did not complete the survey to encourage their participation.

The questionnaire was developed to meet the specific objectives of this research. It was designed and developed by Opinion Dynamics Corporation and Siddall, Inc., and submitted to WisDOT for approval prior to use. The same questionnaire was used regardless of the method of completion, although a few minor changes existed depending on the characteristics of each method.

All computer programming of the questionnaire (for both telephone and on-line completion) was conducted in-house by Opinion Dynamics. ODC managed the fielding process, conducted all interviews and tabulated the data. The analysis was completed by Siddall, Inc.

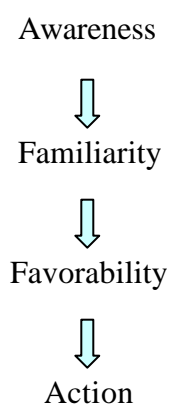
The survey was conducted between February 26 and March 29, 2003. A copy of the questionnaire is appended to this report.

Chapter 1: Findings and Implications for the Local Roads and Streets Rating Program

Finding: Contrary to the opinions of many stakeholders, municipalities throughout Wisconsin complied with the new local roads rating regulation more often because it was required, than because of any perceived benefits. In an unaided question, nearly two-thirds (63%) said they complied because it was required of them. Furthermore, less than one-half (42%) clearly understand the benefits of complying with the regulation.

Implication: Communications for the launch of the local roads rating requirement have successfully generated awareness of the requirement and generated a sense of responsibility among localities in terms of the necessity of complying. Genuine belief in and understanding of the benefits have yet to be fully realized.

Communications work through an intellectual and emotional process that can be described as a series of steps through which the audience passes as attitudes develop and grow. First, awareness of the issue or subject is developed. Then, as awareness continues to grow, it leads to greater familiarity of the audience with the subject. Familiarity leads to favorability or belief in and support for the subject. Finally, we can expect the audience that believes in the message or communications to act on the basis of those beliefs. This process is illustrated in the diagram on the following page.



While WisDOT seems to have made progress in terms of awareness, familiarity and action, it has yet to make real progress in terms of generating favorable support and belief in the program. This support and belief will be important for future compliance and for support and belief in WisDOT. The more WisDOT is associated with important, beneficial programs, the greater the support for it across the state.

In order to create favorable perceptions of the local roads assessment requirement, and other WisDOT programs, message content is particularly important. To benefit most from the resources invested, communications must move beyond generating awareness and incorporate more persuasive messages that demonstrate the benefits of the program.

Finding: Over time, and with involvement with the program, support for the new requirement has increased. When initially learning of the requirement, only 22% of locality representatives viewed it as a benefit. Now that they have completed the requirement, been involved in training, and participated in discussions at meetings and conferences, that proportion has increased to 42%.

Implication: The more experience officials have reporting local road ratings, the more belief and support for the program will grow. This will further improve once the database is ready for municipal use. To enhance that growth, communications should include “experiential” opportunities that allow the audience to participate and do something. “Hands on” communication, such as training and practice sessions and participatory sessions at local and statewide conferences and meetings, should play important roles in providing persuasive experiences for locality representatives.

Finding: PASER training sessions were well-attended and effective ways of teaching local representatives about the new requirement. More than three-fourths (78%) of local officials attended PASER training, and 90% of those who attended considered the training to be effective. Counties were particularly likely to attend PASER training (92%) and to rate it as effective (100%).

Attendees who rated the training favorably and those that did not mentioned the same concerns, including: software and computer issues, no materials or software at the session and too much information or confusing information covered at the session, although some of these cover PASERWARE training as well. Some who rated the training unfavorably also mentioned that their instructor(s) was/were not knowledgeable.

Implication: Although PASER and PASERWARE training was well received, it can be improved. Improvement should include simplification or reduction of the amount of material covered at a session, resolving computer and software issues, making sure material and software are part of the training, and ensuring that instructors are qualified and knowledgeable.

Finding: Municipalities who relied on employees of their county or the regional planning commission to do the actual work are less likely to say they are very likely to comply in the future than are municipalities who used their own employees to rate the roads. Less than two-thirds of municipalities who did not use their own employees to rate the roads are very likely to comply in the future.

Implication: If possible, special efforts should be made to communicate with those municipalities who did not use their own employees for the actual rating of the roads. WisDOT, through county officials and the regional planning commissions, should consider encouraging these municipalities to use their own employees; doing so may encourage long term cooperation and compliance.

Chapter 2: Findings and Implications for General WisDOT Communications

Finding: Localities across Wisconsin received information about the new requirement through a variety of sources. Direct mail, statewide conferences and meetings, and articles in newsletters and magazines distributed by associations were the most frequently relied upon sources of information about the requirement. However, the extent to which each of these methods were relied upon depended on the type of municipality. Different locality types also differed in the value they placed on the various sources of information.

Towns most often received information through direct mail, local meetings, and articles in newsletters and magazines from their association. They rated local and statewide meetings and direct mail as the most useful sources of information.

Villages most often received information through direct mail and local meetings. These were the information sources also most frequently rated as useful in learning about the new requirement. Additionally, villages tended to report that statewide meetings and conferences were useful sources of information.

Cities tended to receive information through direct mail and articles in newsletters and magazines. They did not, however, find the articles to be particularly useful sources of information. Instead, they rated local and statewide meetings and direct mail as most useful.

County officials seemed to rely heavily on meetings for information. They frequently cited conferences and meetings -- especially those that were statewide -- as sources of information about the new requirement. They also tended to receive information through direct mail from WisDOT and through articles in association newsletters and magazines. Most useful for them were meetings (statewide and local) and direct mail. As with other localities, they did not rate articles in magazines and newsletters as particularly useful sources of information.

Implication: A variety of communication vehicles are necessary to reach representatives across Wisconsin localities. No single type of communication vehicle seems to have the ability to reach all audience members. WisDOT should adopt a “layered” approach to communications. This type of approach employs a variety of different types of communication vehicles to meet the objectives of a specific program. Each vehicle is used for a specific objective or objectives, and each is targeted to a specific audience or audiences. For example, direct mail appears to be best suited to generate awareness of programs and requirements. It can be used to introduce and inform the audience about new programs and requirements. However, direct mail alone cannot generate adoption and support of programs. Communication that is more effective in motivating an audience to adopt and support a program requires some “experiential” learning. Local and statewide conferences and meetings, training sessions and demonstrations are useful experiential vehicles for communication.

- **Direct Mail:** Direct mail is still considered an essential form of communication for all types of municipalities. For the time being, it should continue to be part of any communications campaign undertaken by the Department.

- **E-Mail:** E-mail is now an effective means of communicating information to county and city representatives, most of whom have government e-mail addresses that they use on a daily basis. E-Mail is an inexpensive and effective method for communicating basic information on a wide variety of topics. E-Mail is not yet effective in reaching villages and towns, although this may change in the next few years. For the time being, the Department should ensure they have up to date e-mail addresses for all cities and counties.
- **Articles in Association Newsletters and Magazines:** Articles in association newsletters and magazines are particularly effective among towns, yet are somewhat less effective among villages, counties, and cities. For this reason, a special effort should be used to communicate with towns through the association. It should be stressed, however, that regardless of the audience, the articles are valuable in lending credibility to programs because they communicate the support of the specific association, at little cost to the Department. Association support or endorsement of programs and requirements is important to stakeholders.
- **Local meetings:** Local meetings were an important means for many municipalities to receive information, particularly at the town and village level. The Department should continue to facilitate and encourage local and regional meetings whenever possible if targeting villages and towns. They are less important when targeting cities and counties.
- **Workshops at Statewide Conferences:** Workshops at statewide conferences were important for communicating technical details of the requirement to municipal representatives throughout the state. Counties, in particular, rely on statewide conferences for learning information; efforts to communicate to counties should definitely include appearances at the statewide conferences. In general, appearances at statewide conferences are less critical when communicating to other local officials.
- **Association Telephone Calls:** Because phone calls did not play an important role in the communications plan for the local roads rating requirement, it is not possible to evaluate this communication vehicle in this instance. Generally speaking, phone calls are not as efficient as other forms of communication, e.g., direct mail, and will probably not play a key role in WisDOT communications plans.

Finding: The involvement and support of statewide associations were important for the success of this program, although the level of involvement varied widely by the specific association. Overall, three-fourths (75%) of the localities were aware their association (e.g., Towns Association, League of Municipalities, Alliance of Cities, Counties Association, County Highway Association) supported the project. Additionally, 80% of those who knew that their association supported the project said support was important to them.

Association support was particularly important for counties; 92% of counties said they were aware of the support of their association, and 86% said support was important for their compliance. Association support was also very important for town representatives, many of who received key information from their association newsletter. The League of Municipalities was less active in the process.

Implication: Association support is important for generating commitment for WisDOT projects and programs. Working with and through statewide associations helps to generate awareness and credibility for WisDOT projects and programs. Continue to use statewide associations to communicate with Wisconsin localities – especially at the county level. Ongoing relationships with associations should be fostered to ensure their support of WisDOT activities and initiatives.

Finding: Nearly all locality representatives (97%) would read a newsletter from WisDOT.

Implication: WisDOT should explore the development of a newsletter as a way of communicating with local representatives across the state. Through a newsletter, WisDOT can generate awareness and support for specific programs and initiatives as well as generate support and belief in the Department overall.

Finding: Not all locality representatives have access to e-mail. About two-thirds (67%) of locality representatives currently have access to e-mail. Access is highest among counties (96%) and cities (92%). It is somewhat lower among towns (60%) and villages (75%).

Implication: While e-mail may appear to be an accessible, cost-effective means of communicating with localities, it has a limited reach. When targeting villages and towns, WisDOT should not rely upon e-mail as an overall communication tool for new programs and regulations. However, when targeting counties and cities, e-mail can be a practical and efficient means of communication, in combination with other methods.

Finding: Generally, local representatives would prefer contact with WisDOT through a district office (48%) rather than the central office (5%), although many do not prefer one over the other (46%). Counties (73%) and cities (62%) are particularly likely to prefer contact through a district office.

Implication: Recognize the role district offices can play in communicating to local stakeholders and generating their support for WisDOT programs and initiatives. Nevertheless, communication organization “best practices” suggest that “central office” management and coordination are essential for consistency and clarity. While district offices can play a key role in communicating with local audiences, the WisDOT central office must act as a communications center to coordinate and support all WisDOT communications.

WisDOT stakeholders interact with a variety of WisDOT representatives. Each interaction is an opportunity to communicate information about specific projects and programs and to build and enhance the imagery of WisDOT. In order to use these opportunities most effectively, every WisDOT representative who interacts with stakeholders and the public as a representative of WisDOT should be aware of this opportunity and responsibility and should have fundamental communication skills.

Chapter 3: Compliance

Consistent with the overall results, over 99% of the respondents to the survey said they complied with the regulation. This chapter deals with the reasons why municipalities did or did not comply with the regulation. As is demonstrated below, the perspectives of stakeholders, as expressed in the depth interviews, were quite different than those of local municipalities on this issue.

In-Depth Interviews

Most stakeholders expected a reasonably high level of compliance, especially given the role of the Local Roads and Streets Council, the involvement of the associations, and the communications effort of WisDOT. However, stakeholders were surprised by the nearly universal compliance.

“But as far as the cooperation, I am astounded by the amount of concurrence that we’ve had from communities that it is a worthwhile project that they put some time into.”

“Actually I figured I just set a benchmark of 70% response would be the level that I would term it a successful project.”

Stakeholders generally attribute the high compliance rate to the benefits to municipalities, rather than the fact that it was a regulation.

“Many times people did it because they believed in it and did the right thing.”

“I think one of the big messages was it was in their self interest.”

Most stakeholders believed association support was critical to the effort. They believed there was initial skepticism among many municipalities, but association support helped overcome this skepticism.

“When the town associations led the way they did, they number one took care of the largest amount of municipalities for one thing and number two, gave us perfect ammunition to hit the towns, cities and villages with and say look at these towns without staff and what they did, how the hell can you have an excuse for not doing it.”

“Well I think first of all you have to look at or ask yourself why did it go so well? Maybe I can rephrase the question and I think it went so well because of two factors. One the state involved this group (an association) as a partner and secondly it was the right thing to do.”

While most stakeholders believe that municipalities responded as a result of the many benefits of the program, they were generally unsure of which specific stated benefit was most influential in the decision to comply. One benefit thought of by many stakeholders as especially critical was the improved ability to lobby the legislature for funding.

“I think really for those two different groups that I described, for the less sophisticated yes that was the message that with more information you can make better decisions. And better decisions means you’re making more cost effective decisions. I think for the other group there was an explanation of well we’re doing this so we can better answer what is the need on the local road system on a statewide basis. And we’ll be able to argue better for our general transportation needs.”

“The collection of this information was going to allow local governments to make their case for the needs that existed on their system.”

“Probably the opportunity to generate some legislative support for additional funding for local highways, specifically county highways.”

Reasons for Compliance

As mentioned above, stakeholders generally believed that municipalities complied with the regulation due to the benefits of the program to those municipalities. However, when asked in an unaided question why they complied with the regulation, municipalities were much more likely to say they complied with the new regulation because it was a requirement, rather than because of any benefits associated with the program.

Table 3.1. Reasons for Compliance (Unaided)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Requirement	63	64	61	66	43
Help with local decisions	11	11	11	14	11
Learn about road conditions	10	9	10	11	16
Beneficial for community	8	7	11	9	9
Avoid penalty / loss of funding	5	6	4	5	5

Respondents who did mention specific benefits tended to focus on local decision-making and knowledge of local roads. The improved ability to lobby the state government was rarely mentioned.

Interestingly, 5% specifically mentioned wanting to avoid a loss of funding or other penalties, even though there weren't any penalties for non-compliance.

Reasons for compliance also depended on the role of the individual respondent. Town and Village Clerks, for example tended to focus on the fact that it is a requirement (78% cited this reason). County Highway Commissioners (46%) Village Presidents (50%) and Town Road Supervisors (55%) were less likely to focus on the fact that it was a requirement, and were more likely to cite various benefits.

Table 3.2. Reasons for Compliance by Role

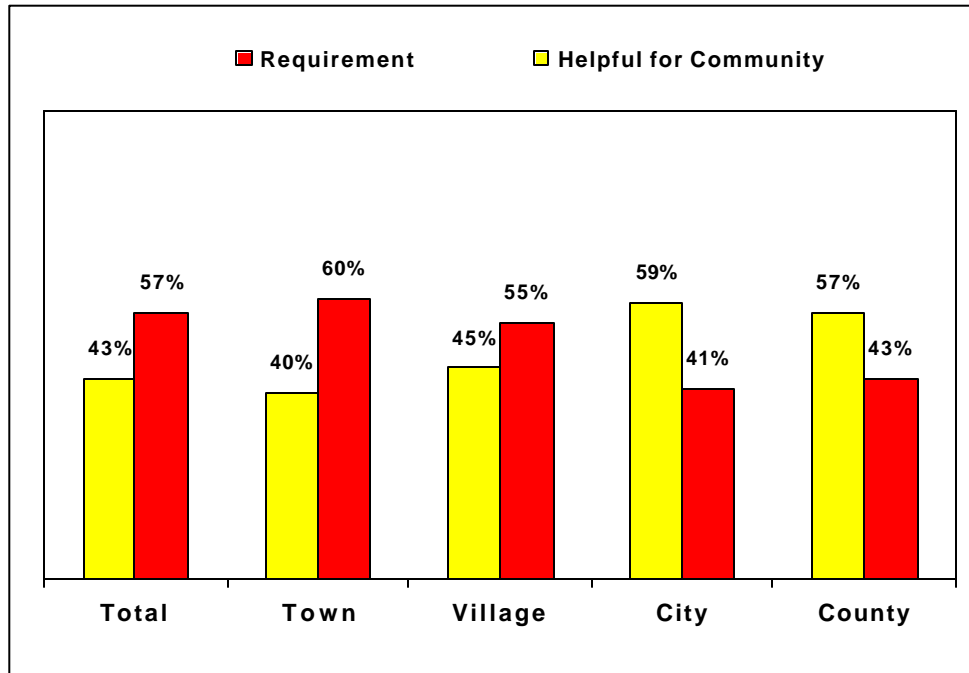
	<u>Chairmen</u>	<u>DPW</u>	<u>Clerks</u>	<u>Vill. Pres</u>	<u>County Hghwy Com.</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Requirement	62	61	78	50	46
Help with local decisions	13	14	6	10	9
Learn about road conditions	8	13	9	10	17
Beneficial for community	9	12	4	15	11
Avoid penalty / loss of funding	6	6	3	--	6

Those respondents who were aware that their association supported the project were more likely to cite the benefits of the program as the reason for complying than respondents who were unaware of their association's support.

Finally, those communities who had already been rating their roads focused on benefits to the community, while those who had not been rating their roads focused more on the fact that it is a requirement.

Overall, localities were more likely to comply because they perceived compliance was required (57%) rather than because it would be helpful to the community (43%). In particular, this was true of towns and villages. Cities (59%) and counties (57%) were more likely to comply because they believed it would benefit their community.

Graph 3.1. Perception of Road Assessment as Helpful or Requirement



Once again, we see a split depending on whether the community had been rating their roads prior to the requirement. Over half (53%) of communities who had already been rating the roads complied because it is helpful to their community. The same is true of less than one-third (32%) of communities who had not been rating the roads in the past.

Perceived Benefits of Compliance

While the majority of municipalities complied largely because it was a requirement, most respondents did see some benefits to complying with the regulation. When asked in an unaided question to name the primary benefits of compliance, the most frequently cited benefit is the help the information provides for local decision making and planning. Nearly one-half (45%) cited this contribution as the main benefit of compliance. Second, officials said compliance helps them to gain knowledge about current road conditions (26%).

The improved ability to lobby state government, which was mentioned frequently in the stakeholder interviews, was mentioned by only 7% of municipalities.

Table 3.3. Main Benefits of Compliance

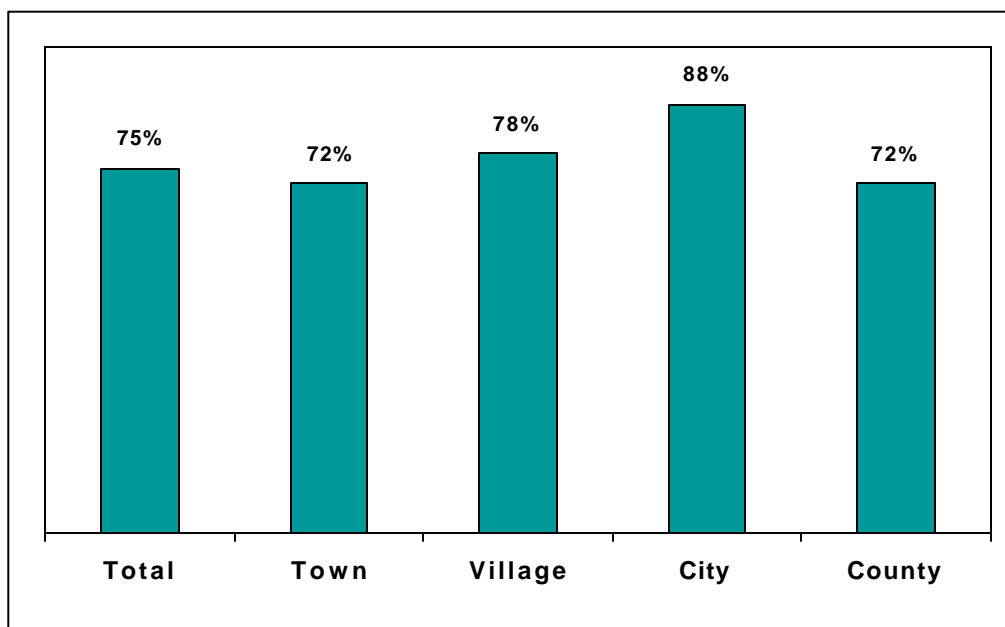
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Help with local decisions / planning	45	44	46	58	43
Gain knowledge of current road conditions	26	27	22	23	38
Better able to lobby for state funds	7	5	9	4	14

Most common responses listed only

Most municipalities would have complied with the regulation even if they saw no benefit at all to the program. Among those who complied with the regulation and saw some benefit in it, three-fourths (75%) indicated they would have complied even if they had not believed there was a benefit for their locality. City officials (88%) are particularly likely to have said they would comply, regardless of whether they could see a benefit.

**Graph 3.2. Proportion Who Would Have Complied --
Regardless of Perceived Benefit***

*Based on those who complied and believed the requirement was a benefit to their community.



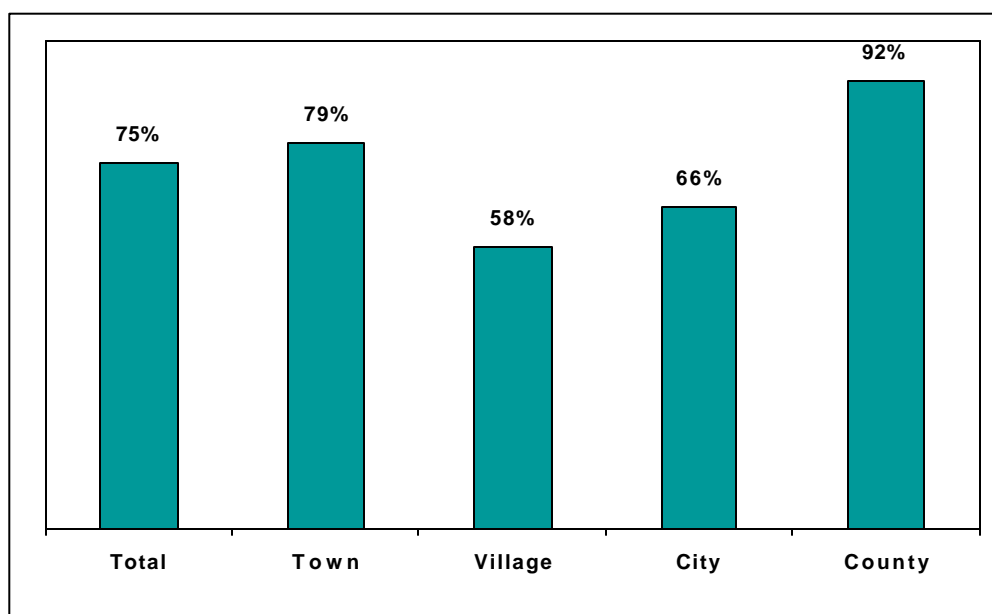
Town Chairmen (30%) and Village Presidents (30%) were the most likely to say their municipality would not have complied with the regulation if they did not consider it a benefit. Directors of Public Works and City Engineers were the most likely to say their municipalities would have complied regardless of whether they considered it a benefit for the community.

Association Support

Another factor mentioned by stakeholders as important to the success of the program was the involvement of municipal associations.

The majority of municipalities are aware their association supported the program. Counties (92%) are significantly more likely than the other localities to be aware their statewide association supported the requirement. Villages (58%) and cities (66%) are least likely to know their statewide associations supported the project.

Graph 3.3. Awareness of Statewide Association Support

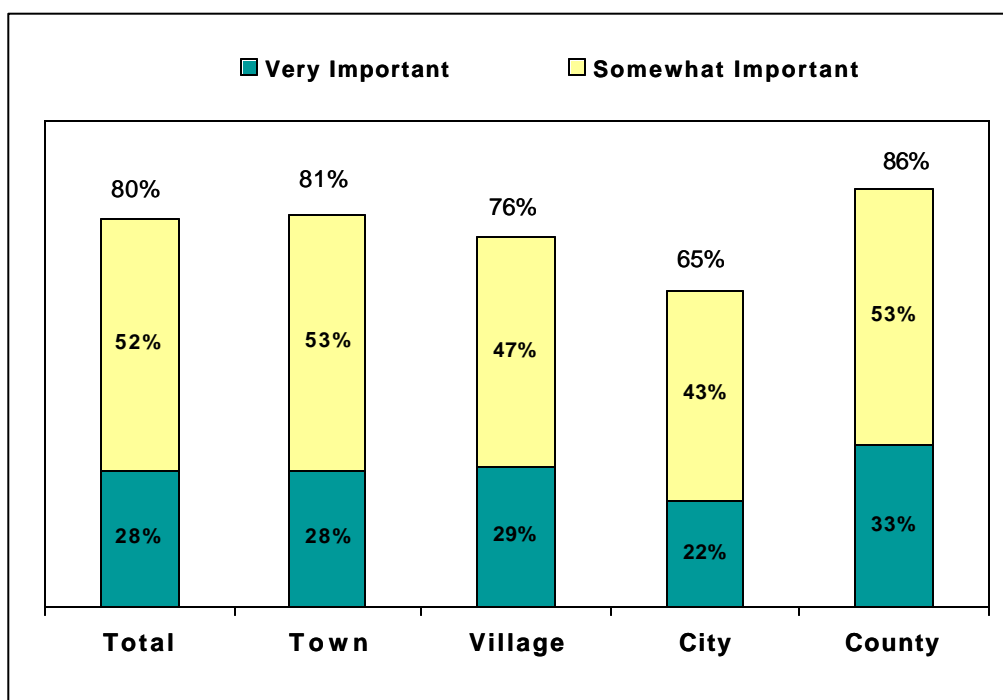


Note: Question cited these associations in order to clarify the question for respondents: Towns Association, League of Municipalities, Alliance of Cities, Counties Association, County Highway Association.

When we view the positions of the respondents, we see that Directors of Public Works and City Engineers were the least likely to be aware of the associations' support. Most Town Chairmen and all County Highway Commissioners were aware of the association support.

The support of the associations was important to those who were aware of the support. Eighty percent (80%) of those aware of association support said it was at least somewhat important to them, although few people said it was very important. It mattered least to cities (65%) and most to counties (86%).

Graph 3.4. Importance of State Association Support of the Project
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Important -

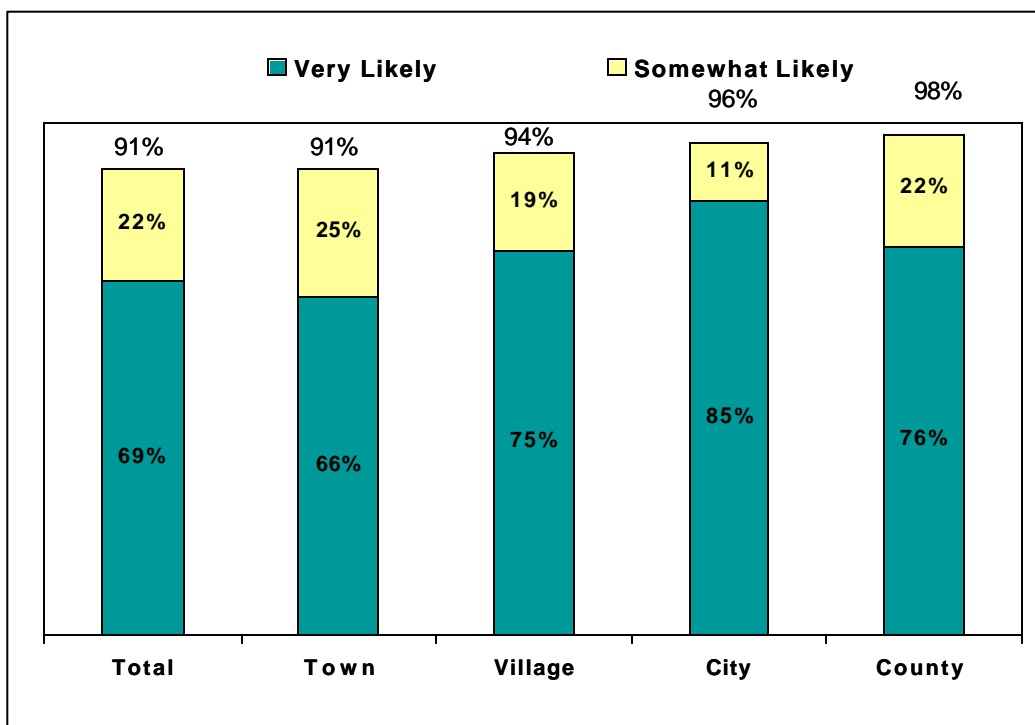


Based on those aware of association support.

Intentions to Comply in the Future

Most localities across the state report they will comply with the regulation in the future - 91% of locality representatives said they would be “very” or “somewhat” likely to comply in the future. However, this figure is lower than the actual compliance rate this year (99.5%) and therefore suggests a risk for a lower compliance rate may occur in the future. Furthermore, many of those who report they are “somewhat likely” to comply in the future may not do so as well.

Graph 3.5. Likelihood of Complying with Regulation in the Future
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Likely -



Cities are the most likely to say they are “very likely” to comply in the future. Towns are the least likely to report they are “very likely” to comply.

Intentions for future compliance appears to be tied to a variety of factors. For example, those communities that used their own paid employees are more likely to say they will comply again in the future than those who used outside consultants or employees of other municipalities. Ease is also a factor; communities who say they are not likely to comply in the future generally did not find it easy to conduct the initial ratings.

When asked why they may not comply, Most of those who are not likely to comply cited a lack of benefits, the expense of the program, or a perception that the program is a waste of money.

Chapter 4: Non-Compliance

A special effort was made to obtain completed surveys from communities who did not comply with the regulation. In total, eleven communities who did not comply with the regulation responded to the survey. Due to the small sample size, the results are not presented graphically.

It appears there is no dominant reason why municipalities did not comply. In an un-aided question, reasons for non-compliance included being unaware of the requirement (2 responses), lacking the knowledge or technical ability to comply (2 responses), not understanding the requirement (1 response), lacking the time to comply (1 response), and other similar responses.

In closed-ended, aided questions, three respondents said they lacked technical knowledge to comply, and four said the timing of the deadline was a problem.

Chapter 5: Perceptions of the New Regulation

This chapter focuses on the perceptions of municipalities and stakeholders to the new regulation. Stakeholders generally believed that municipalities understood the benefits of the program, and that they were aware that the idea for the program originated at the local level, rather than at WisDOT. However, interviews with local municipalities showed a different perception. Many municipalities are still undecided whether the program is a benefit to them, and most perceive the program as originating from WisDOT, not other local communities.

Stakeholders

Many stakeholders expressed a belief that municipalities were initially skeptical of the requirement, but with the assistance of the associations, the municipalities came to understand the benefits.

“I think initially there’s always an inclination of local government people to be concerned about anything that the state asked them to do. It’s the unfunded mandate horror story.”

“I think there’s always when you say this is a new thing you have to do there’s a lot of people in the state call anything new is a mandate, you know I have to do it. So if you didn’t have to do it 10, 15 years ago why is it all of a sudden important now is the question and then we tried to sell it on you know what is the benefit not only to us as an association politically to make our case on needs, but for you as a local official to use this kind of management tool.”

Stakeholders also believed county representatives understood the benefits of the new regulation early on, but towns and villages needed to be persuaded of the benefits and ease of complying with the regulation.

There was substantial disagreement during the in-depth interviews regarding the source of the requirement. Some stakeholders believe municipalities viewed the requirement as a “bottom-up” project, in which people the demand for the ratings came not from WisDOT but from other Municipalities. These respondents thought that this perception was the key to compliance. Other respondents believed municipalities viewed the requirement as “top-down,” or as a mandate from WisDOT.

“I think one of the things that’s really important is that we had to convey to them that this program was something that was a initiative of - brought together by local government people in concert with the DOT. This was not a DOT proposal. That it was in fact a local government initiative and that local government people were behind the proposal...”

“We certainly did our best to remind them where we believe the idea came from, from the local Road and Streets Council and this is not something that DOT is trying to force people into doing... That was essential. I would say the whole success and I don’t know DOT might be disappointed to hear this but it wasn’t necessarily what they did. It was

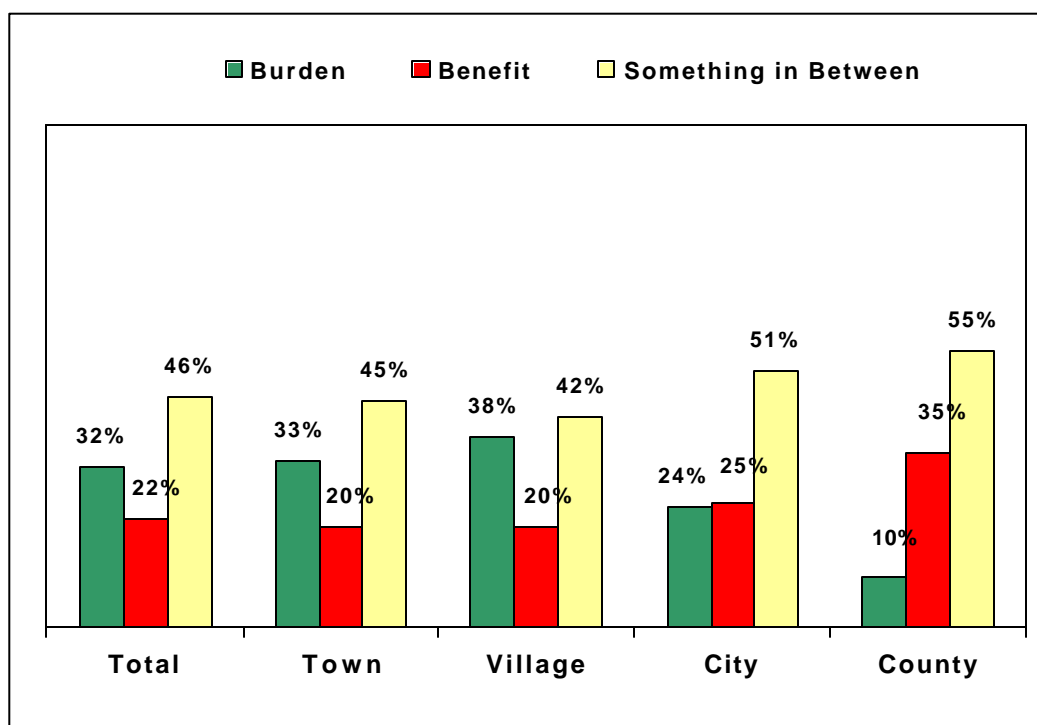
that we felt it was our idea or at least it was good for us, for local government and we have a great relationship with our members, they pay us to watch out for them and we went and said this is a good idea we really need to do it. So that's I think what really convinced them, that it was okay and there wasn't as much resistance as there might have otherwise been."

Initial Perceptions

When they first learned of the requirement, officials saw it as something in between a burden and a benefit (46%). Counties were most likely to initially recognize the benefits of the requirement. Ninety percent (90%) of county representatives said that they initially saw it as a benefit (35%) or as something between a benefit and a burden (55%).

Villages had the most difficulty in initially recognizing the benefits. Among village officials, 38% initially saw the requirement as a burden, and 42% saw it as something between a burden and a benefit.

Graph 5.1. Initial Perception of Requirement

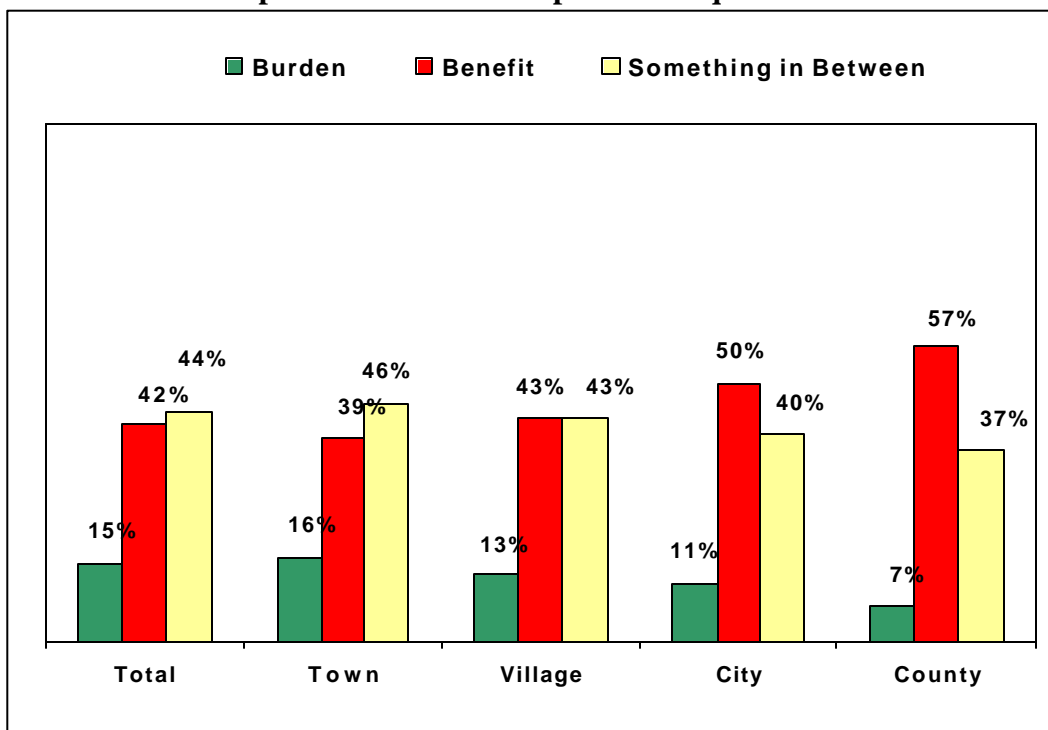


Municipalities who had already been rating their roads were more likely to initially view the requirement as a benefit than municipalities who were not rating their roads. Only 15% of municipalities who were not already rating their roads initially viewed the requirement as a benefit.

Current Perceptions

Perceptions of the requirement have improved over time, indicating a successful communications program. However, while many localities see some benefit from the requirement, some do not see it as a clear benefit. Forty-two percent (42%) said the requirement is a benefit. In contrast, 44% said it is something between a benefit and a burden, and 15% said it is simply a burden.

Graph 5.2. Current Perception of Requirement



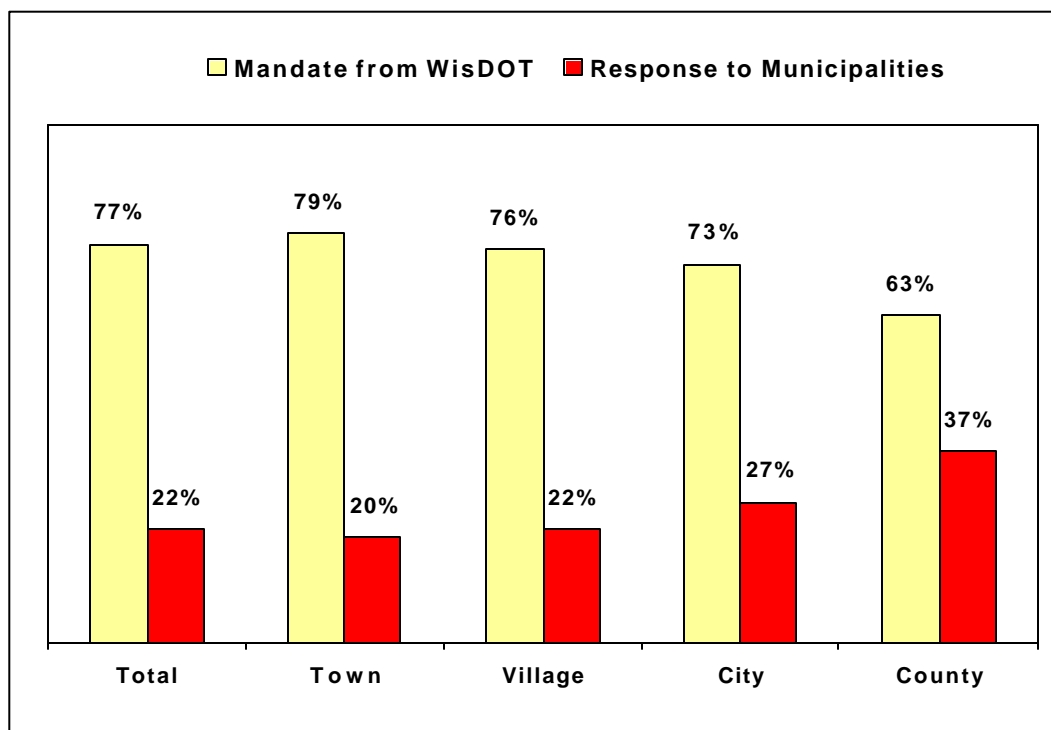
County officials (57%) are most likely to believe the new requirement is a benefit to their municipality. Less than half of towns and villages see the requirement solely as a benefit to their municipality.

Fifteen percent of those who consider the requirement a burden for their community say they are unlikely to comply again in the future.

Perceived Origins of the Requirement

Many of the stakeholders interviewed believed the key to success was that the push for the requirement came from the municipalities themselves, through the Local Roads and Streets Council, rather than from WisDOT. However, few municipalities perceived the requirement as a response to the desires of local municipalities. Over three-quarters of all municipalities viewed the requirement as a mandate from WisDOT.

Graph 5.3. Perception of Requirement: A Mandate from WisDOT or a Response to Desires of Local Municipalities



Counties are more likely than the other localities to view the requirement as a response to municipalities, although only 37% of county representatives take that view.

Chapter 6: Communication Assessment

This section looks at the communication efforts promoting the compliance with the local roads pavement rating program. Municipalities learned about the program through a variety of methods, including:

- Direct Mail
- Articles in association magazines and newsletters
- Workshops at statewide conferences
- Local and regional meetings held throughout the state
- Word of mouth passed along from one municipality to another

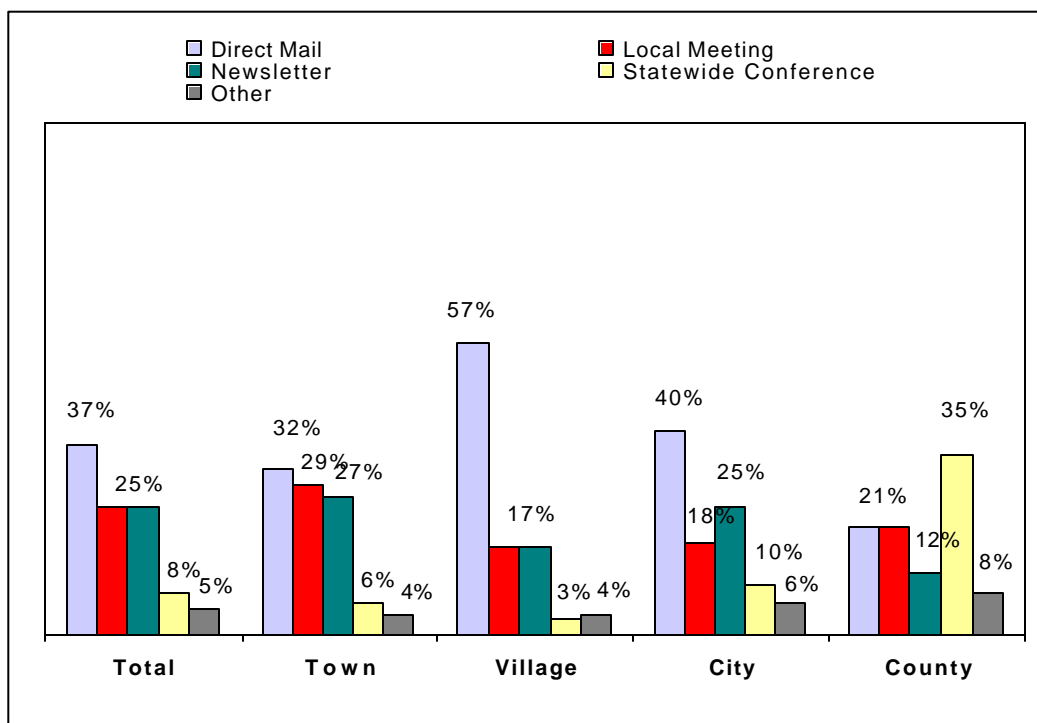
In the qualitative interviews with stakeholders, there was strong agreement that the communications campaign was a success, but no real idea on which aspects of the communications campaign were most important.

Data in this section focuses on what the methods and sources of information were for municipalities, how important those methods were for obtaining compliance, and how useful they were for providing the technical information necessary to comply with the regulation.

Initial Methods of Obtaining Information

Localities most often learned about the local roads assessment requirement through direct mail (37%), followed by meetings of local municipalities (25%) and association newsletters (25%). Only 8% initially learned about the requirement at a statewide conference.

Graph 6.1. How First Heard about Requirement



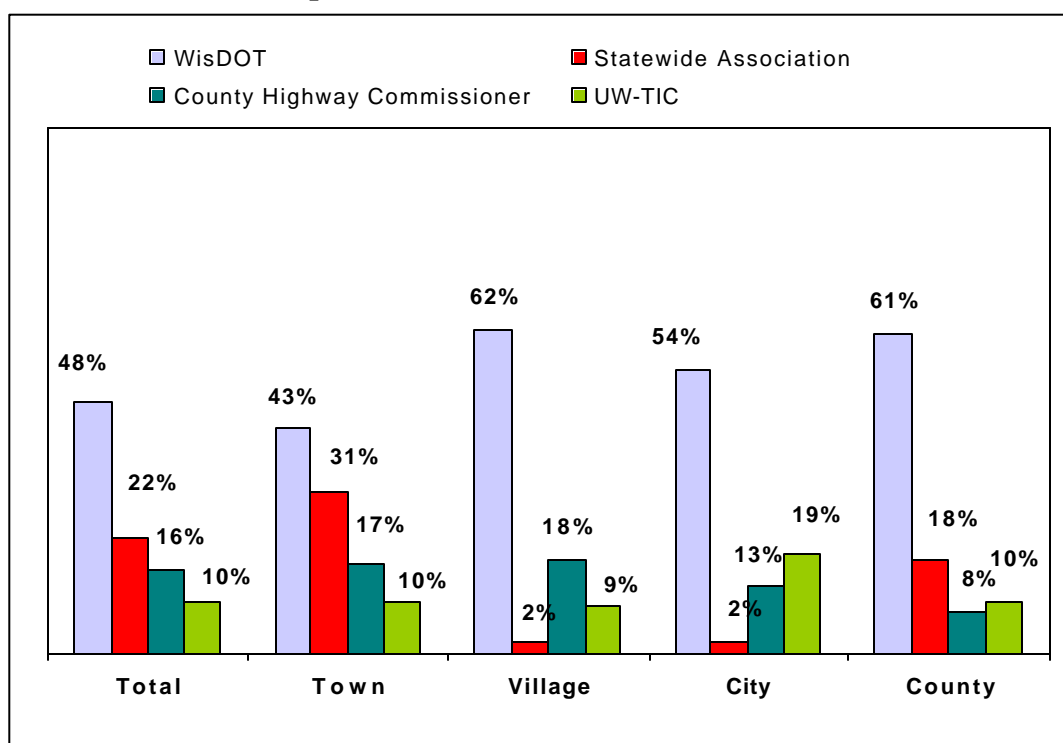
Villages (57%), in particular, learned about the requirement from direct mail. Counties (35%) were more likely to learn about the requirement at their statewide conference than the other types of localities. Towns were about equally likely to have first learned by direct mail (32%), local meetings (29%) or newsletters (27%).

Initial Source of Information

When we examine the initial source of information, we see that about half of all municipalities learned about the requirement from WisDOT, including over 60% of Village and County representatives. The statewide associations were also an important initial source of information for towns (31%) and counties (18%), but not for village and cities.

Many town and village representatives learned about the program from the County Highway Commissioner. City representatives were more likely than other officials to learn of the program from the University Transportation Information Center.

Graph 6.2. Initial Source of Information

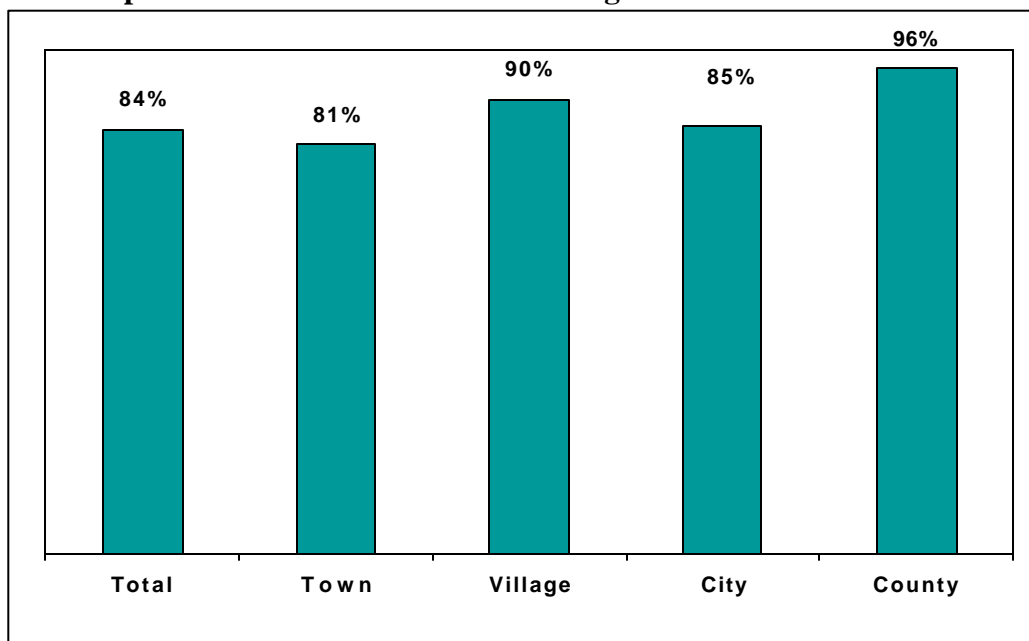


People who have been in their current position for over five years were far more likely to learn of the program from their statewide association than people who have been in their position for less than five years.

Direct Mail

More than 8 of 10 officials (84%) received information about the requirement through direct mail from DOT. County officials (96%) are particularly likely to have received direct mail information. Officials of Wisconsin towns (81%) are least likely to have received information by direct mail.

Graph 6.3. Received Information through Direct Mail from WisDOT

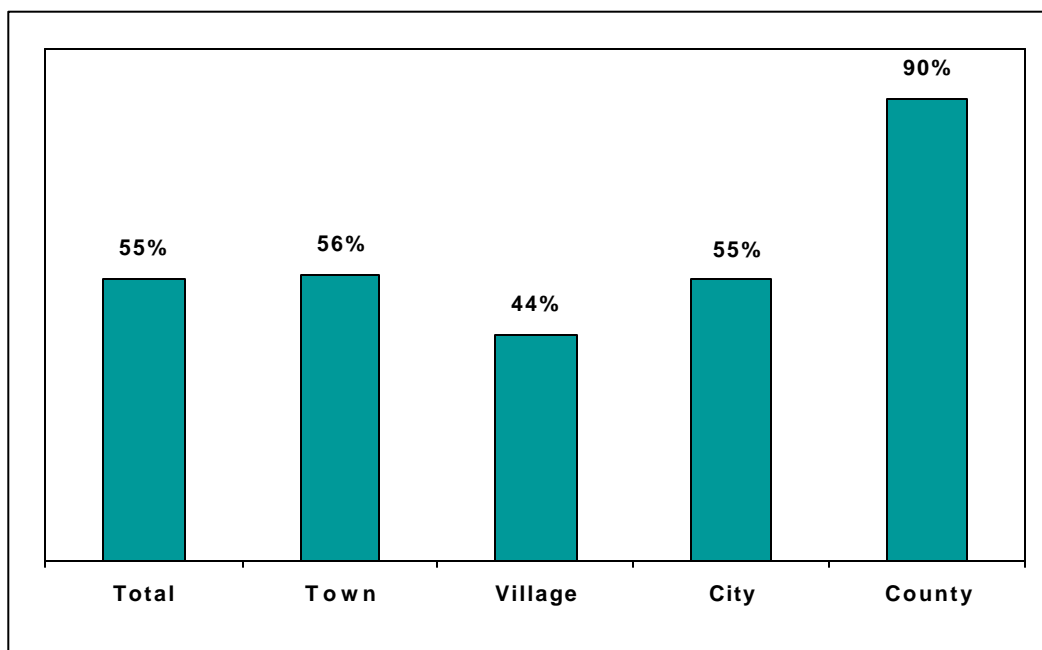


Statewide Meetings and Conferences

About half (55%) of officials across the state received information about the new requirement when attending statewide conferences and meetings. County officials (90%) are particularly likely to have received information at conferences and meetings.

This pattern suggests that county officials may have been more likely than officials at towns, villages and cities to have attended conferences and meetings and, thereby, had been exposed to information about the new regulations at these meetings.

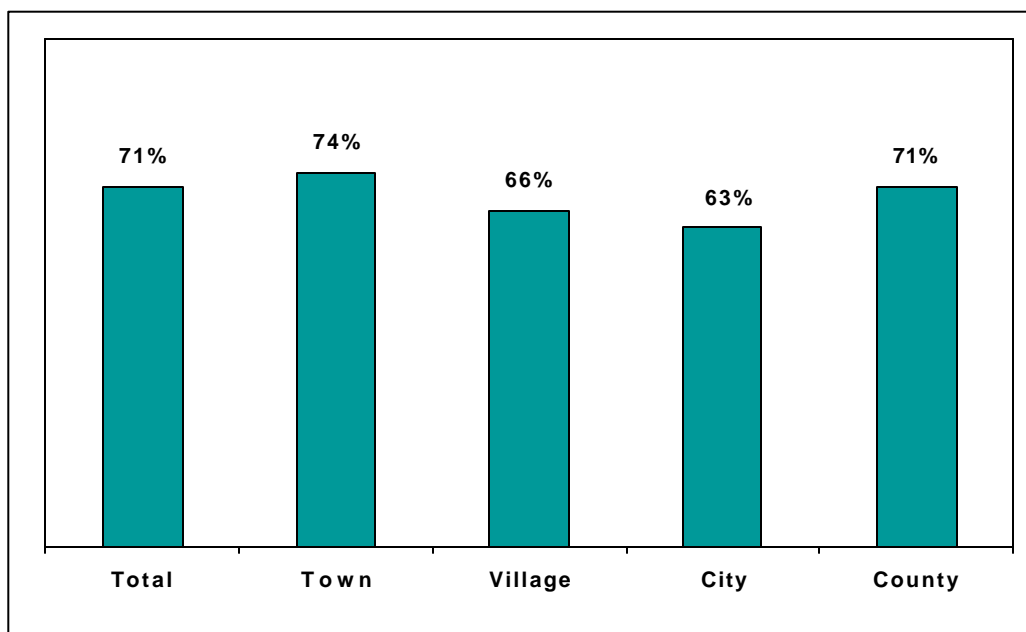
**Graph 6.4. Received Information from Attending
Statewide Meetings or Conferences**



Local Meetings

Many municipalities also indicated receiving information at local meetings; over two-thirds (71%) of municipalities acknowledged obtaining information in this way. Towns (74%) and counties (71%) are more likely than villages (66%) and cities (63%) to report they received information about the new reporting regulations at local meetings.

**Graph 6.5. Received Information from
Local Meetings in County or Region**

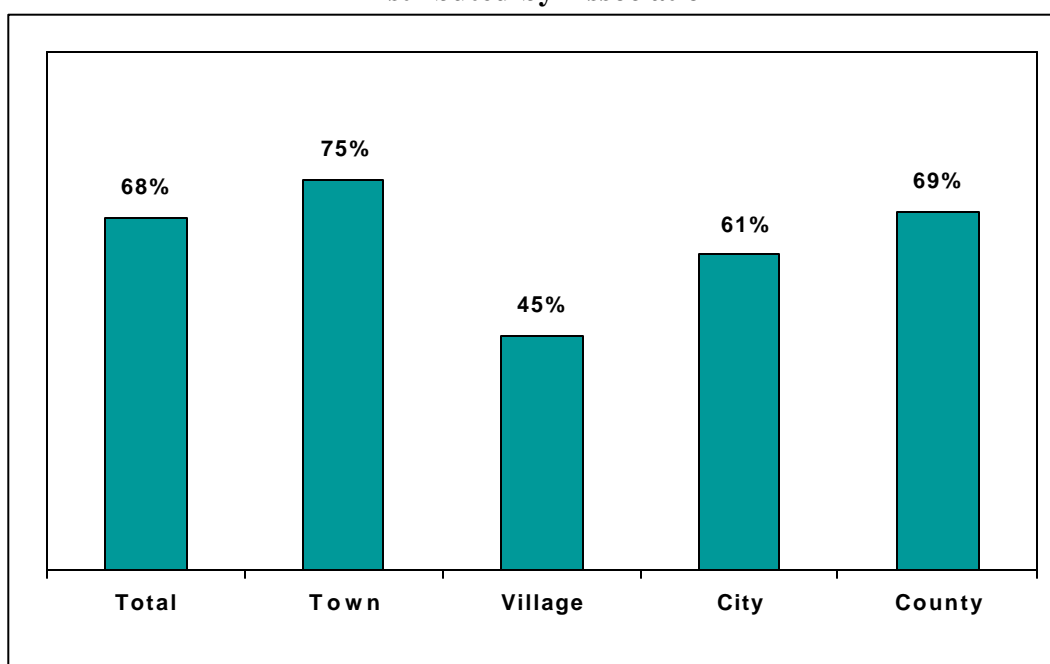


Association Newsletters and Magazines

Newsletter and magazine articles also played a role in distributing information about the new regulations for about two-thirds (68%) of Wisconsin officials. Three-fourths (75%) of town officials, and a majority of city and county officials received information through magazine and newsletter articles.

The one exception is among villages; only 45% of village officials received information through a newsletter or magazine article.

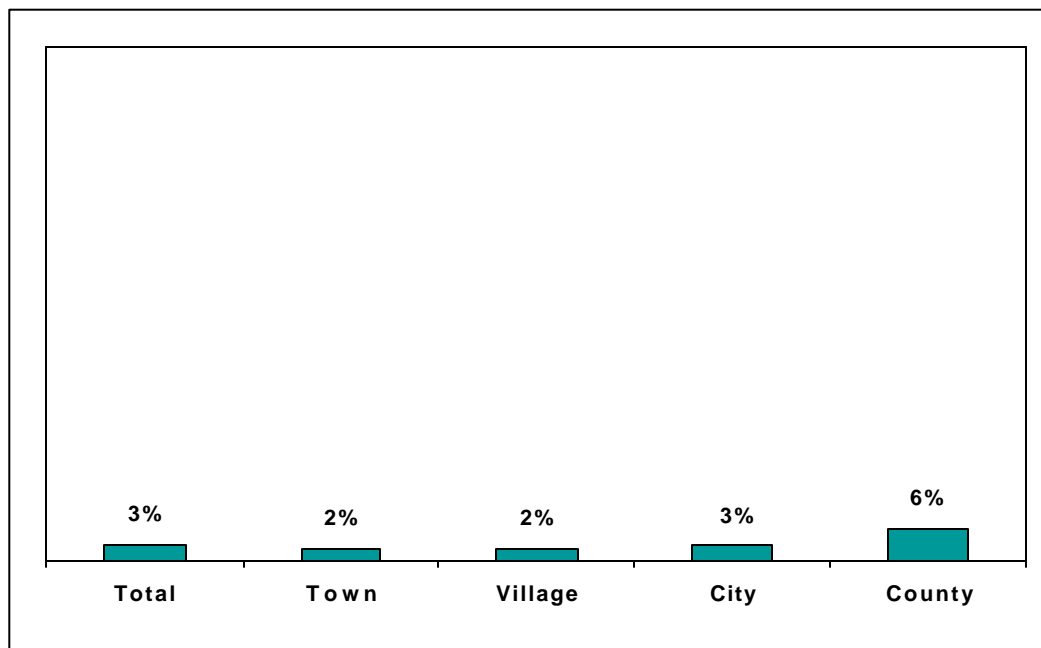
Graph 6.6. Received Information from Articles in Newsletters or Magazines Distributed by Association



Telephone Calls from Associations

Very few officials (3%) across Wisconsin received information about the new regulations by telephone calls from statewide associations. These low values are to be expected since the telephone was not a major tactic in the outreach program.

Graph 6.7. Received Information from Telephone Calls from Statewide Association

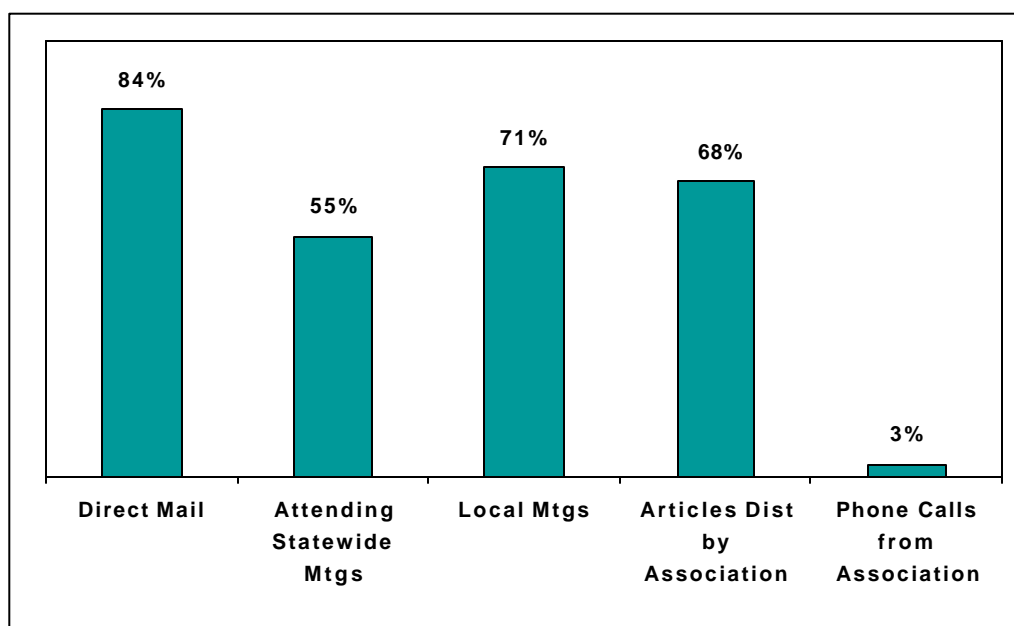


Sources of Information: Summary

It is clear that many of the communications efforts undertaken by WisDOT and the municipal associations were effective in reaching their intended targets. A majority of Wisconsin public officials received information from a variety of sources.

Direct mail (84%) from WisDOT played a key role in informing officials about the new regulations. Also important in communicating with officials across the state were local meetings (71%) and articles distributed by associations (68%). Somewhat less important -- but still reaching over half (55%) of the officials -- were statewide meetings. Phone calls from associations (3%) were of little importance.

Graph 6.8. Source of Information: Summary
- Total Sample -



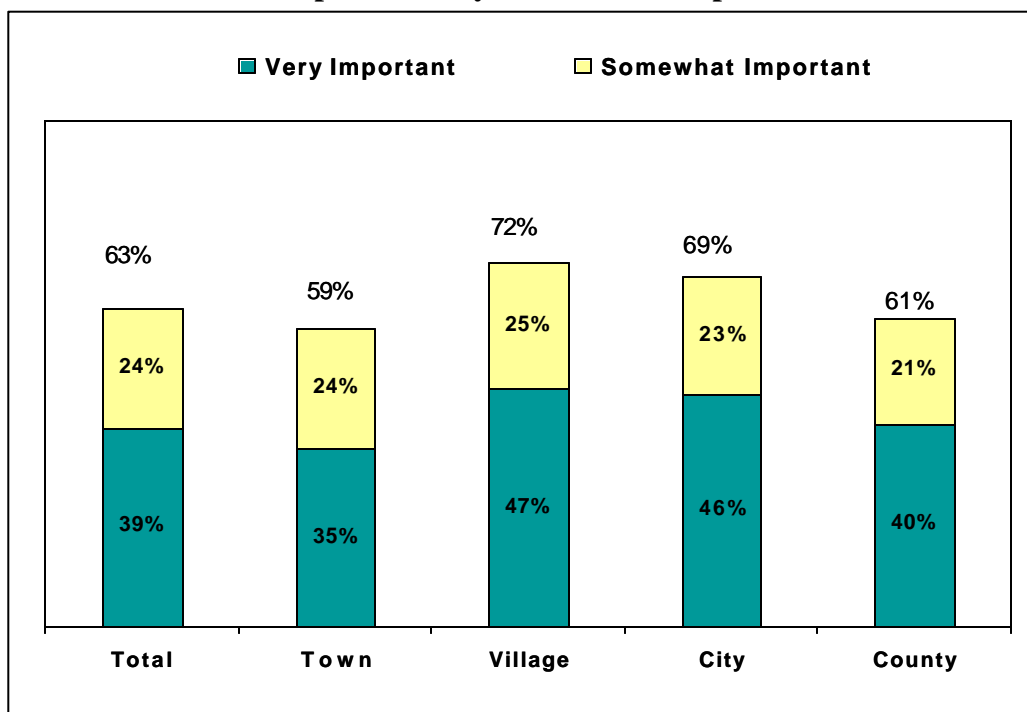
Encouraging Compliance

Respondents were asked how important various communications methods were for encouraging them to comply with the new regulation. In each case, importance was asked only of those people who received information from the given method. As we have seen elsewhere, responses varied by the type of municipality.

Direct Mail

Direct mail was an important source of information encouraging people to comply with the new regulations for a majority of representatives of each type of municipality. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of Wisconsin officials rated direct mail as an important source of information about the new requirements. Officials from villages (72%) and cities (69%) were especially likely to report that direct mail was important.

Graph 6.9. Importance for Compliance of Direct Mail
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Important -

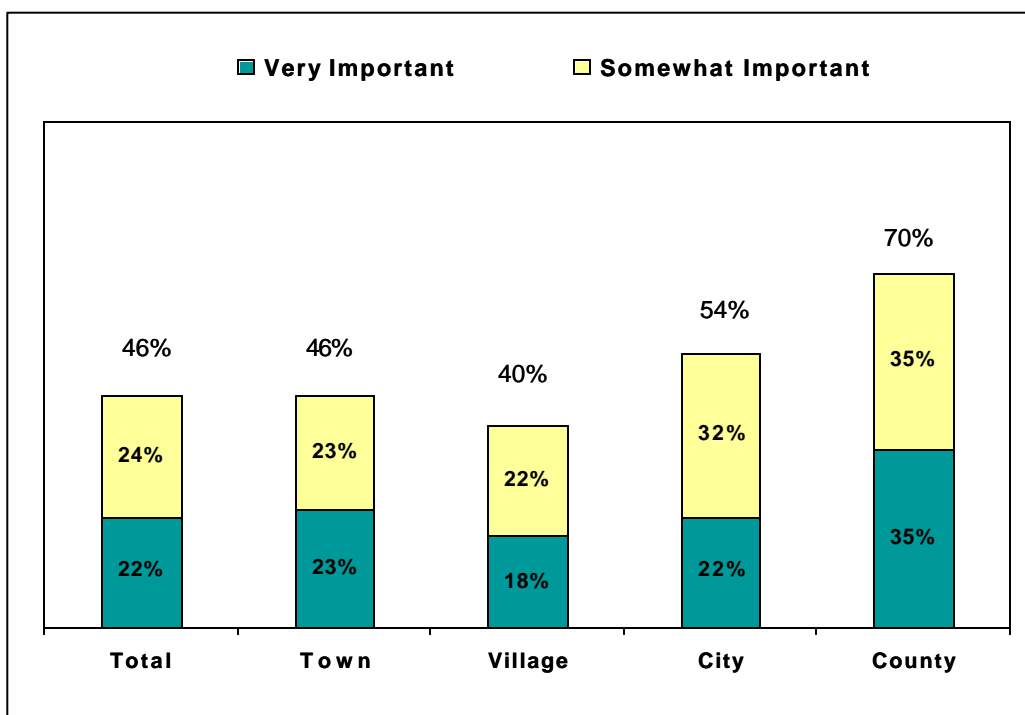


Note: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of this method on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a “4” (somewhat important) or “5” (very important).

Statewide Meetings and Conferences

Statewide conferences were also important to many officials in encouraging them to comply, although less so than direct mail efforts and local meetings. Nearly one-half (46%) of officials responsible for road ratings in their locality rated statewide meetings and conferences as important sources of information about the requirement. County officials (70%), in particular, found these meetings to be important.

Graph 6.10. Importance for Compliance of Statewide Meetings or Conferences
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Important -

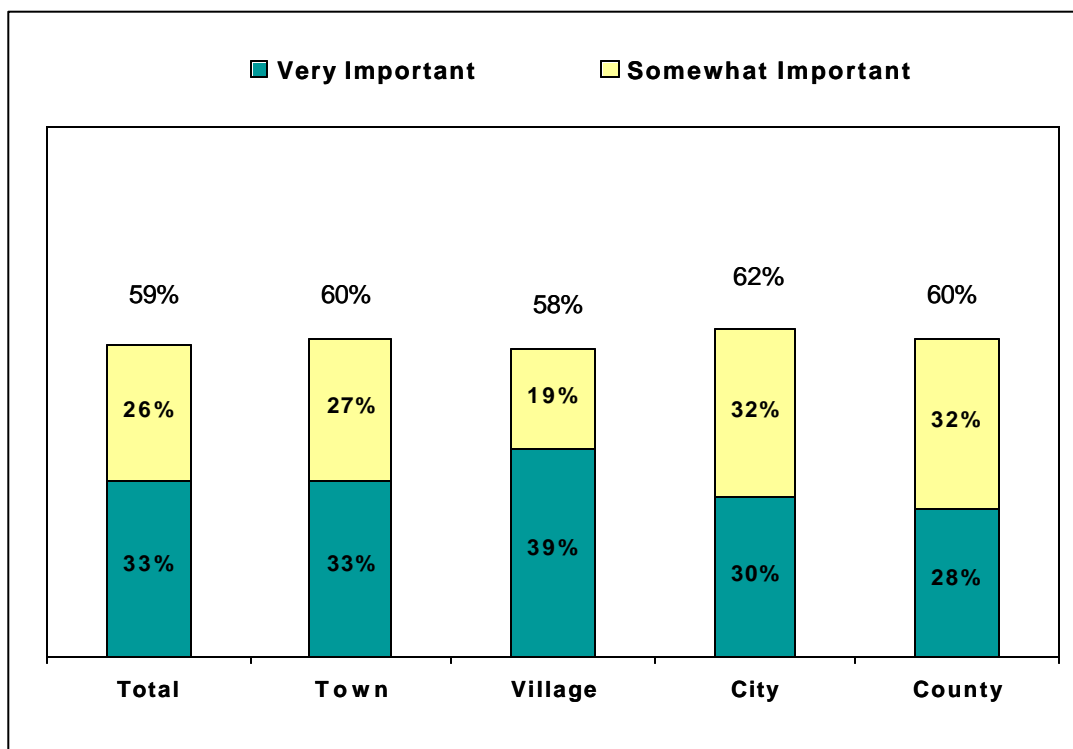


Note: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of this method on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a “4” (somewhat important) or “5” (very important).

Local Meetings

Nearly 6 out of every 10 officials (59%) rated local meetings as important sources of information in encouraging them to comply with the new pavement rating requirements. This level of importance is constant across all locality types.

Graph 6.11. Importance for Compliance of Local Meetings
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Important -



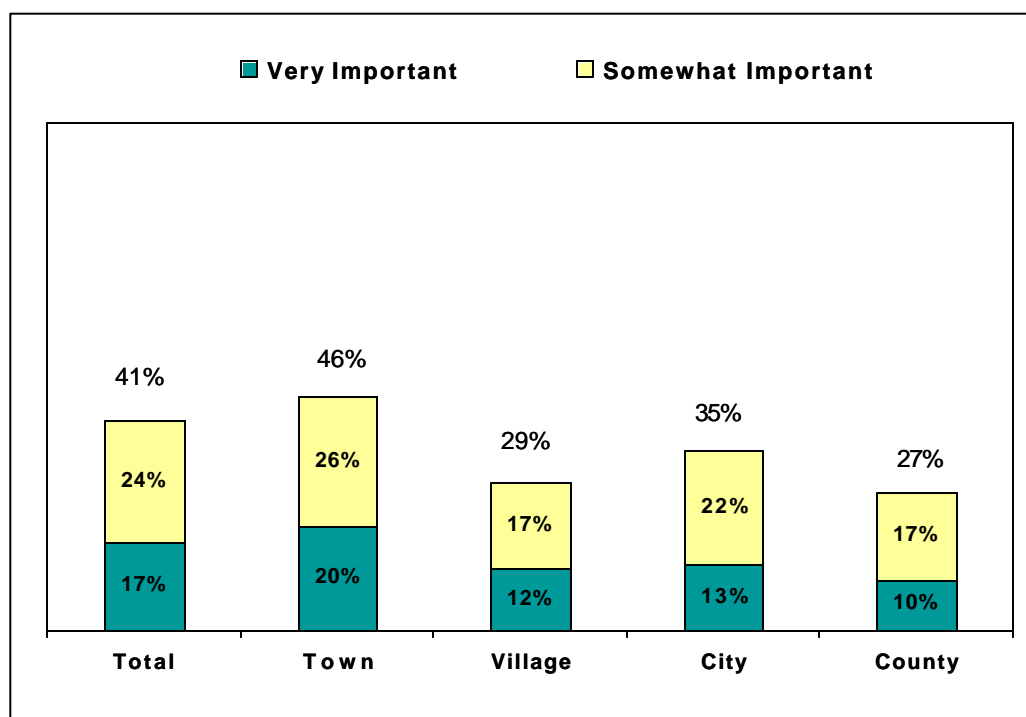
Note: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of this method on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a "4" (somewhat important) or "5" (very important).

Association Magazines and Newsletters

Less than half, 41%, rated articles in association newsletters and magazines as important sources of information encouraging them to comply with the new regulation. Villages (29%) and counties (27%) were less likely than the other types of localities to rate these articles as important.

While this method of communication was probably less important to most officials than direct mail, meetings, and conferences, it is still a low-cost method for disseminating information.

Graph 6.12. Importance for Compliance of Articles in Newsletters and Magazines Distributed by Association - Proportion Very + Somewhat Important -



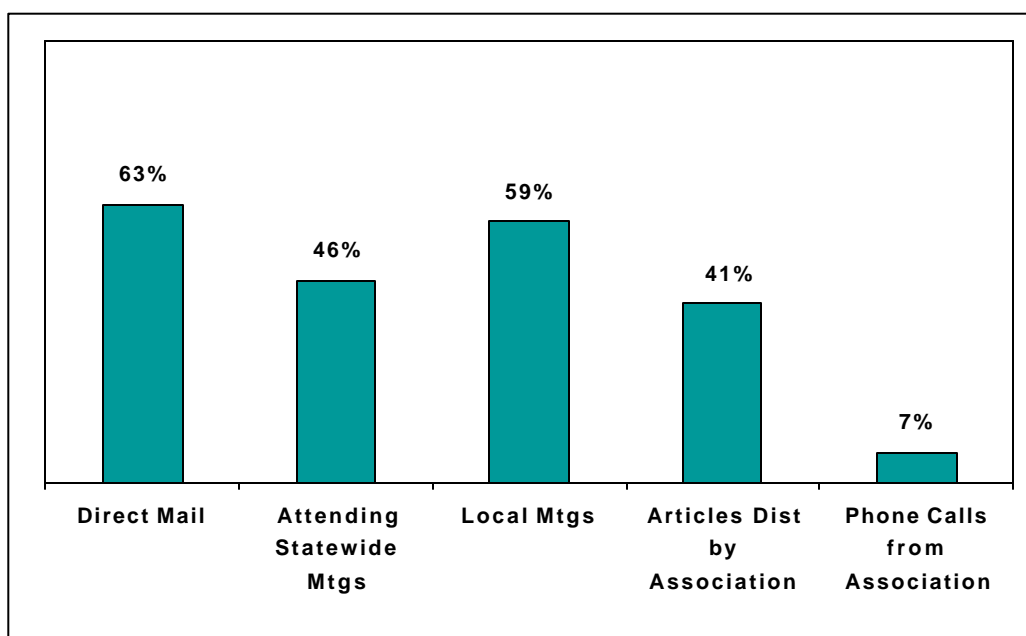
Note: Respondents were asked to rate the importance of this method on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a “4” (somewhat important) or “5” (very important).

Summary of Importance

Direct mail, a traditional form of transmitting information, continues to be among the most important sources of information. Despite the variety of methods used to transfer information, nearly two-thirds (63%) say direct mail was a very or somewhat important source of information.

Surprisingly, local meetings (59%) were considered nearly as important as direct mail, and more important than the other methods. Statewide meetings and association articles were considered important sources of information by less than half of all officials. Few people received phone calls from their association.

Graph 6.13. Importance of Information for Compliance: Summary
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Important -
-- Total --



Note: Combined ratings of "4" and "5" on a scale of 1 to 5.

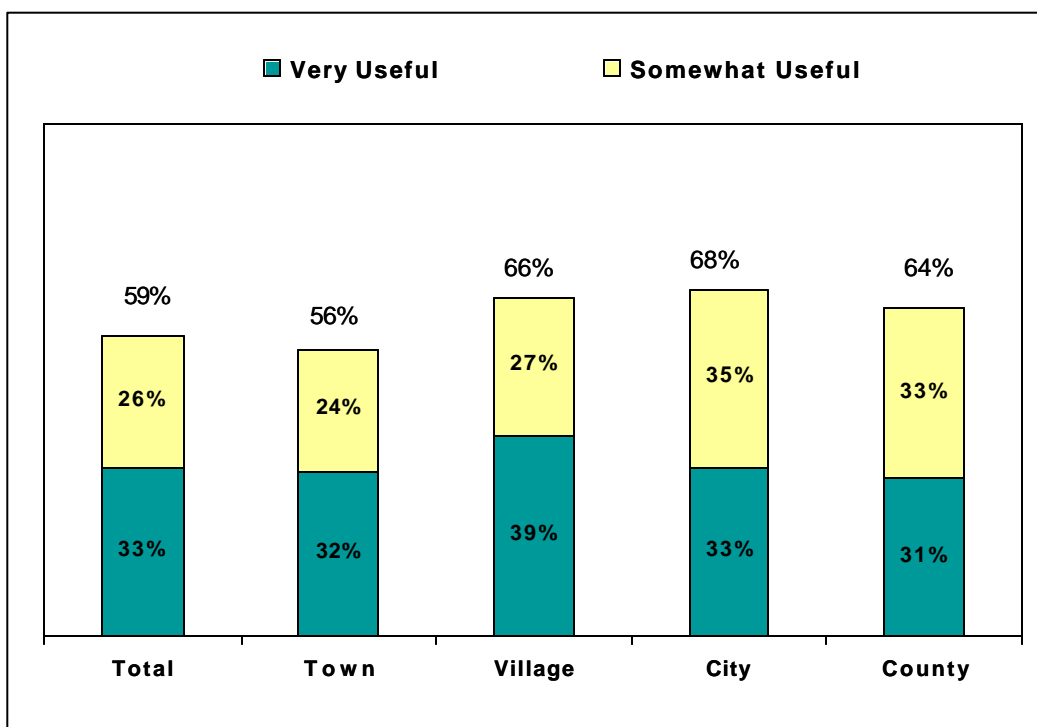
Usefulness for Providing Detail and Technical Information

Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of each method in terms of providing detail and technical information. Once again, responses varied depending on the type of municipality.

Direct Mail

Direct mail was a useful source of information for providing detail and technical information about the new regulations to over one-half (59%) of officials who received it. Direct mail was more likely to be reported as useful for cities (68%), villages (66%) and counties (64%) than for towns (56%).

**Graph 6.14. Usefulness of Direct Mail
for Providing Detail and Technical Information**
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Useful -



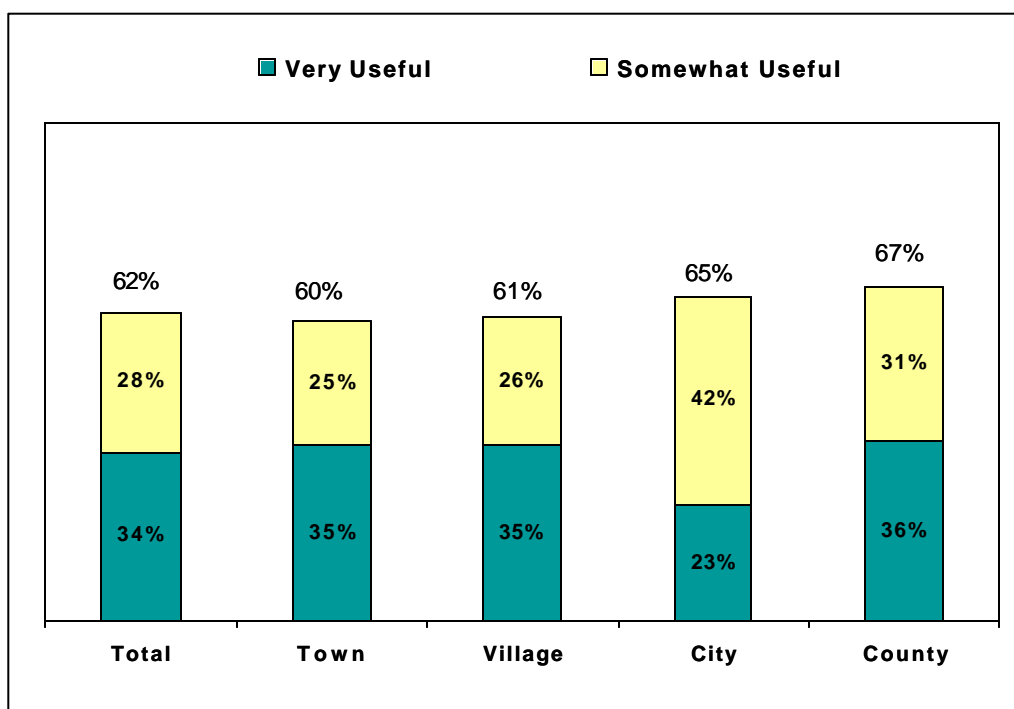
Based on those who received information by direct mail.

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of this method for providing detail and technical information on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a "4" (somewhat important) or "5" (very important).

Statewide Meetings and Conferences

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of those who received information through statewide meetings and conferences found that information useful. This pattern is consistent across all locality types.

**Graph 6.15. Usefulness of Statewide Meetings or Conferences
for Providing Detail and Technical Information -
Proportion Very + Somewhat Useful -**



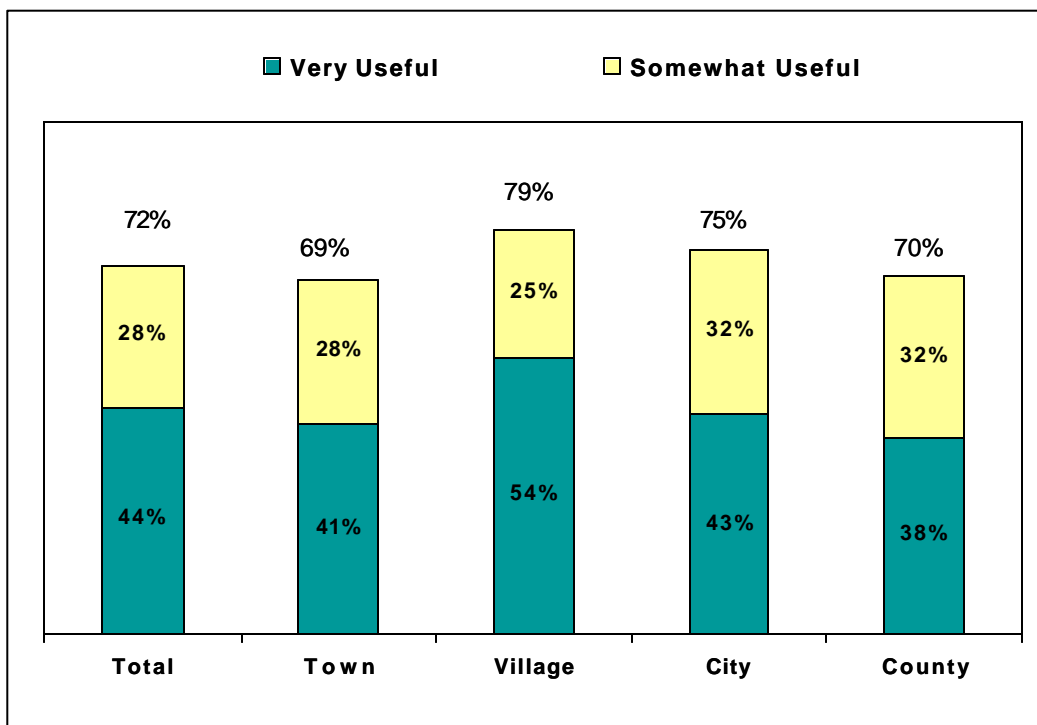
Based on those who received information through statewide meetings and conferences.

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of this method for providing detail and technical information on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a “4” (somewhat important) or “5” (very important).

Local Meetings

Approximately three quarters of local representatives (72%) -- whether towns, villages, cities or counties -- reported that local meetings were useful ways of learning about the new reporting regulations.

**Graph 6.16. Usefulness of Local Meetings in County or Region
for Providing Detail and Technical Information
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Useful -**



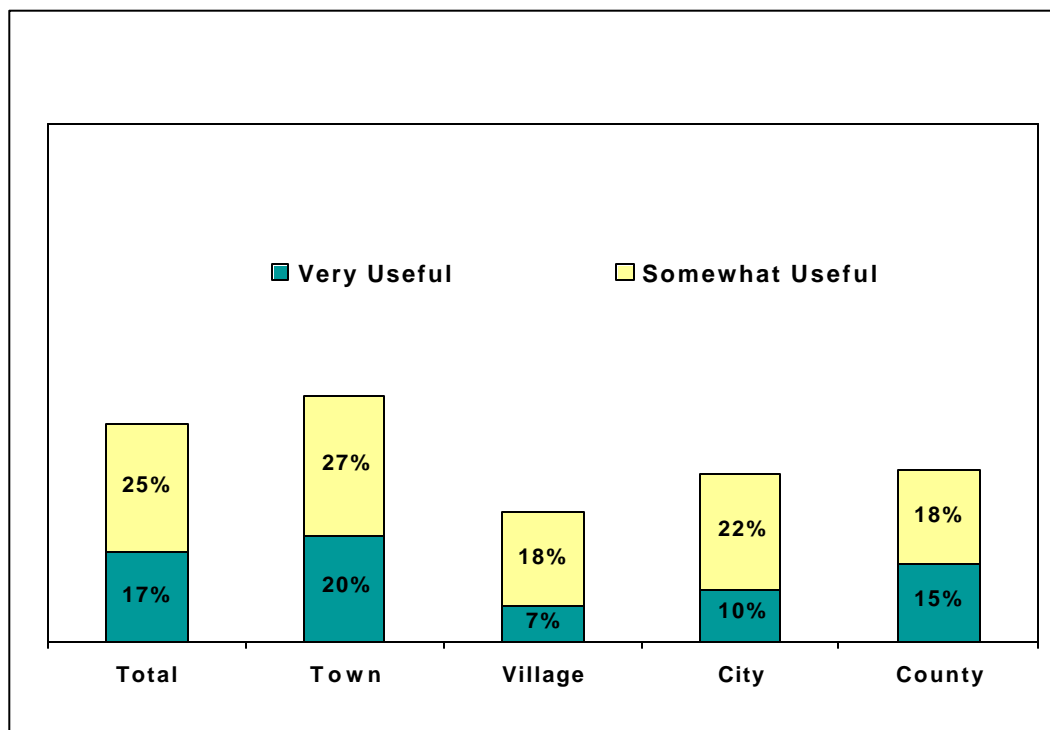
Based to those who received information at local meetings.

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of this method for complying detail and technical information on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a "4" (somewhat important) or "5" (very important).

Newsletter and Magazine Articles

Less than one-half (42%) of localities found articles in newsletters or magazines distributed by associations to be useful sources of information about the new regulations. Towns (47%) were most likely to report this was a useful source of information for them.

**Graph 6.17. Usefulness of Newsletter or Magazine Articles
for Providing Detail and Technical Information
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Useful -**



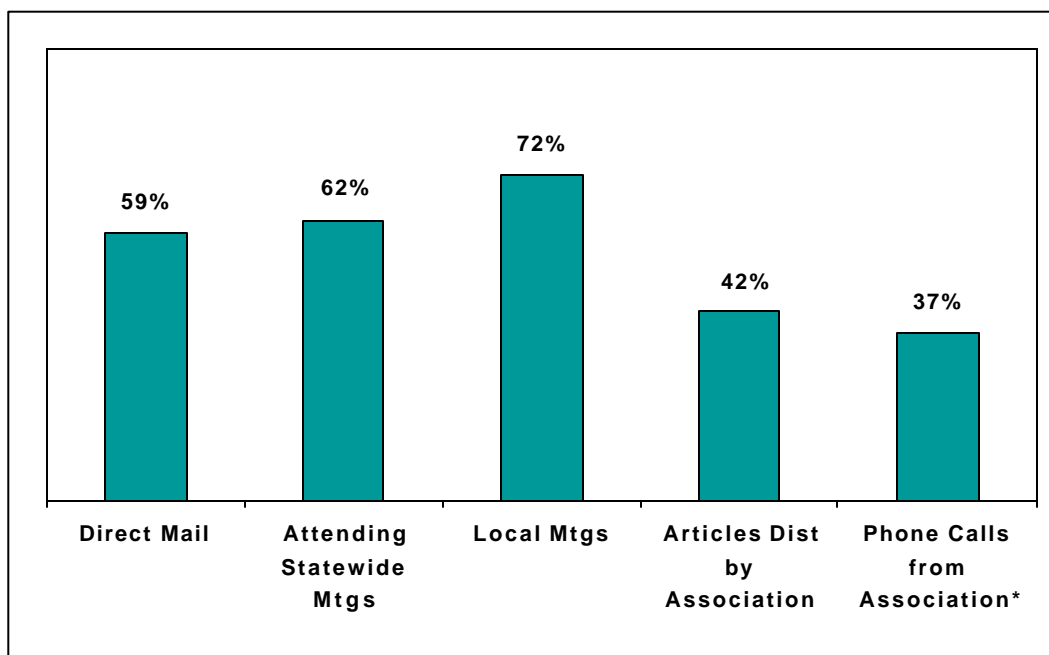
Based on those who received information from articles in newsletters or magazines distributed by association.

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of this method for complying detail and technical information on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a "4" (somewhat important) or "5" (very important).

Summary

Overall, local meetings (72%) were the most useful way of receiving detailed and technical information about the new requirement. Second in terms of usefulness are statewide meetings (62%) and direct mail (59%). Articles (42%) and phone calls (37%) were not as useful to localities across Wisconsin for providing this kind of information.

**Graph 6.18. Usefulness of Information for Providing Detail and Technical Information:
Summary -- Proportion Very + Somewhat Useful**



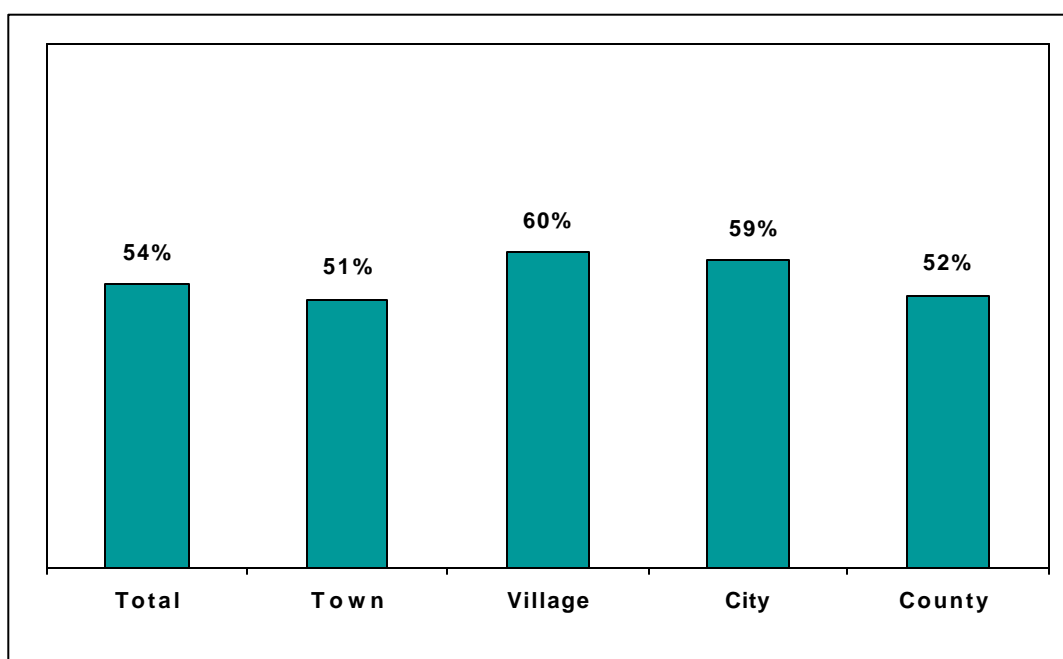
* Interpret with caution due to small base size.

Note: Respondents were asked to rate the usefulness of this method for complying detail and technical information on a one to five scale; responses here reflect the percentage rating the method as a "4" (somewhat important) or "5" (very important).

Chapter 7: Communications Assessment – Answering Technical Questions

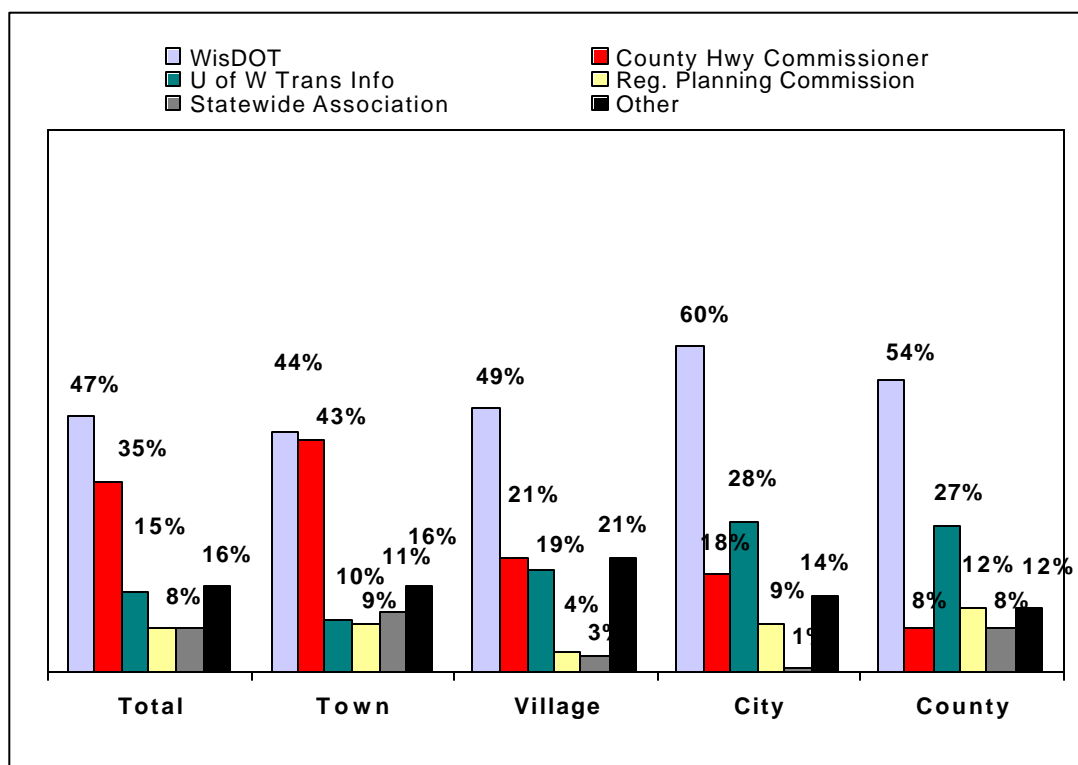
Another form of communication with municipalities involves answering their questions. Many of the municipalities had questions that needed to be answered for them to comply with the regulation. As was learned in the depth interviews with WisDOT staff, the agency alone received 2000 phone calls. This was supported in the survey results – 54% of all respondents said they had questions about the requirements, including 60% of village representatives and 59% of city representatives.

Graph 7.1. Proportion Who Had Compliance Questions



When they had questions, locality representatives contacted WisDOT (47%) most frequently with questions about road ratings. However, there were differences depending on the type of community. For example, city and county representatives were more likely to contact WisDOT than representatives of villages and towns. Towns in particular were likely to turn to their County Highway Commissioner to answer questions.

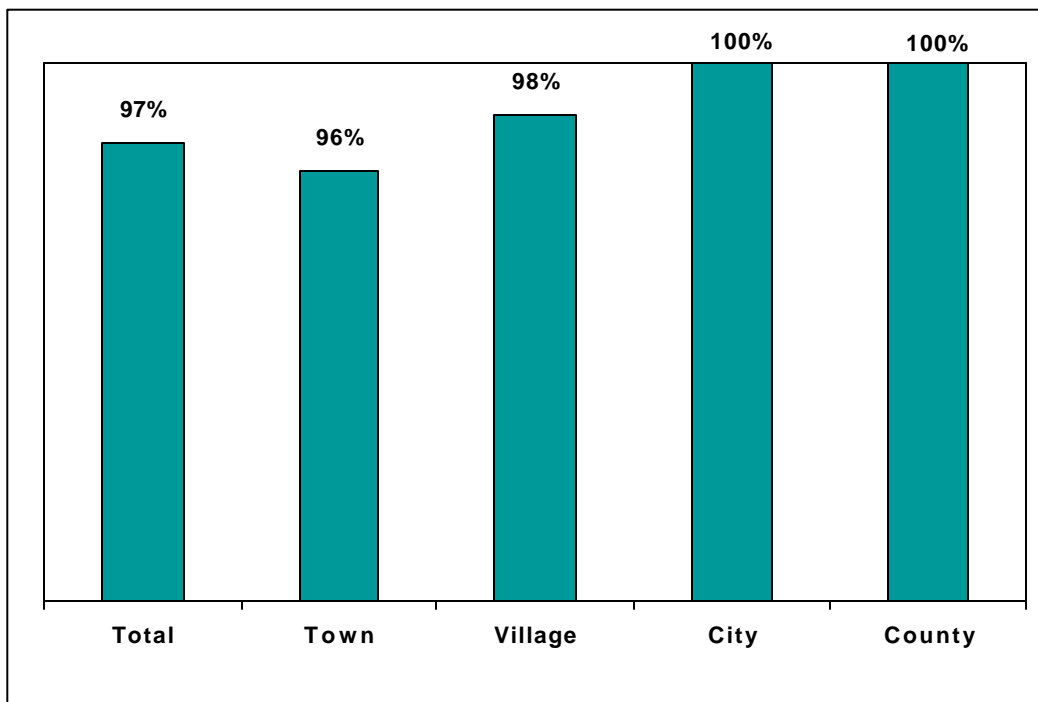
Graph 7.2. If Had Questions: Who Was Contacted for Information



There were also differences based on the position of the respondent. For example, over half (53%) of Town Chairmen contacted their County Highway Commissioner when they had a question. About one-third of Directors of Public Works, City Engineers, and County Highway Commissioners contacted the University of Wisconsin Transportation Information Center when they had a question.

Virtually everyone who had questions about compliance and the new regulations were able to obtain the information they needed.

Graph 7.3. Proportion with Questions Who Obtained the Information They Needed

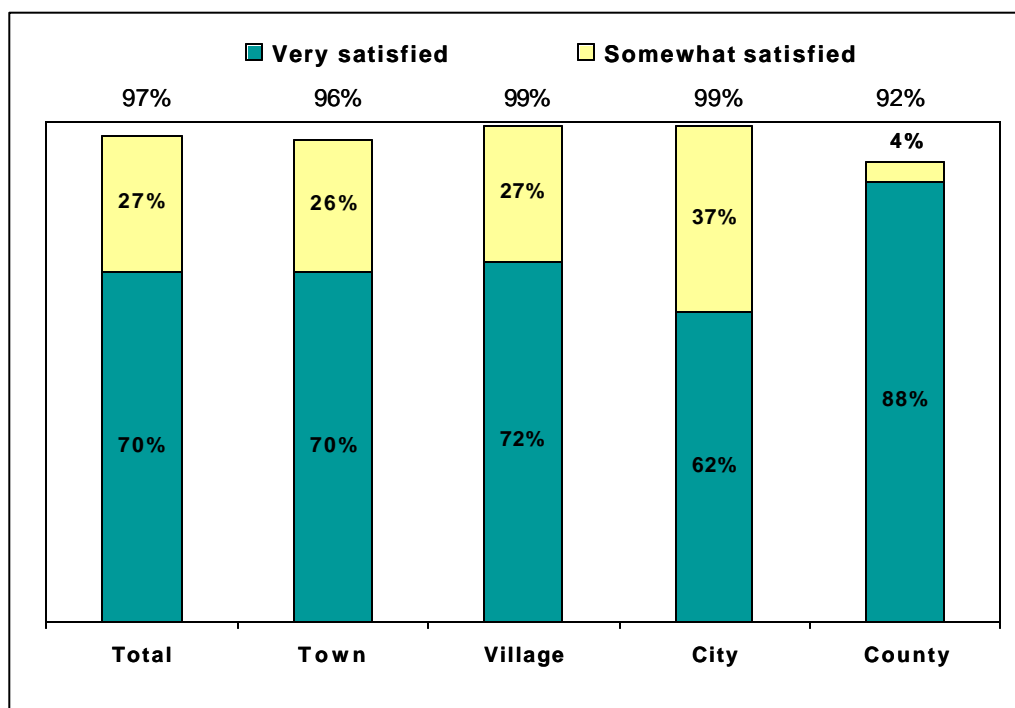


Based on those who had questions and contacted someone for answers.

Nearly all (97%) of those with questions were satisfied with the answers they received.

Those people who were only somewhat satisfied, not very, or not at all satisfied were asked why they weren't completely satisfied. Common responses included they didn't get the information they needed (21%), they had software or computer issues (18%), and that there was a slow response (11%). However, it should be stressed that these made up only a small minority of the overall sample.

**Graph 7.4. Satisfaction with Answers to Questions
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Satisfied -**



Based on those who had questions and contacted someone for answers.

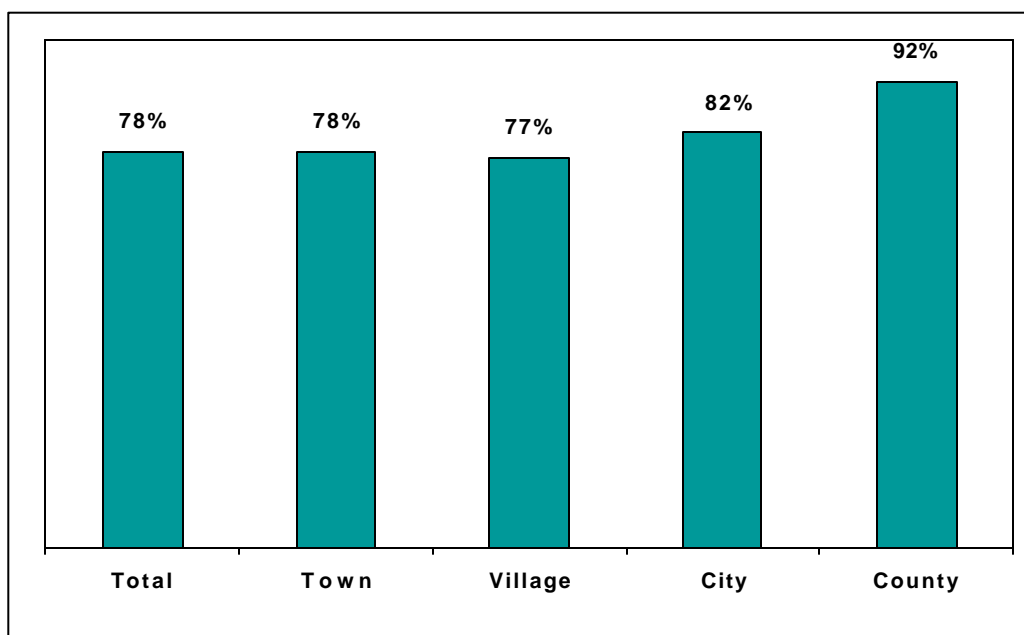
Chapter 8: Communications Assessment – Training Sessions

This chapter looks at participation in, and satisfaction with PASER training. Based on the answers provided, many respondents may have confused PASER training with PASERWARE training. This should be kept in mind when reviewing the results.

About three-fourths (78%) of all officials attended PASER training. County officials (92%) were most likely to have attended PASER training, even though they were least likely to have said reporting was “easy.”

Most county representatives and County Highway Representatives in particular attended PASER training sessions. Village Presidents (51%) were the least likely to say they or someone in their municipality attended a PASER training session, although many may not have been aware that people in their municipality attended a session.

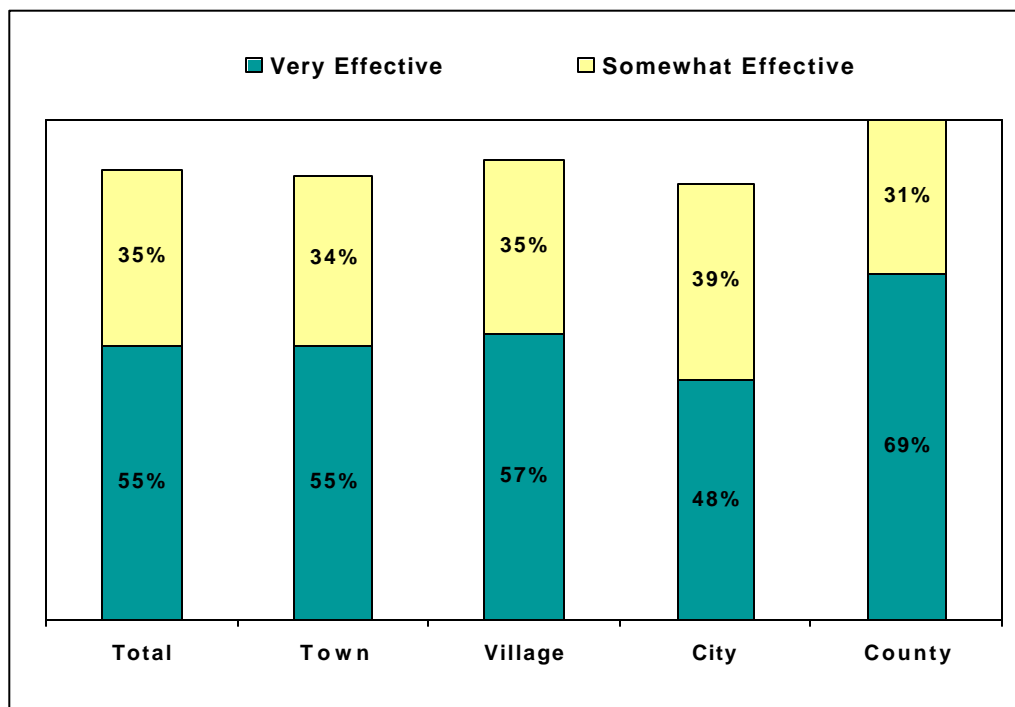
Graph 8.1. Attendance at a PASER Training Session



Effectiveness of Training Sessions

Most (90%) who attended PASER training reported it was effective, including all of the county representatives who attended the training sessions. However, nearly one-third of all respondents rated the sessions as only somewhat effective. Once again, it should be noted that many may have been thinking of PASERWARE training when rating the effectiveness of the sessions.

Graph 8.2. Effectiveness of Training Sessions
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Effective -



Based on those who attended PASER training.

Respondents who rated the effectiveness of the training sessions as somewhat, not very, or not at all effective were asked why they gave that particular rating. Those who rated the PASER training as somewhat effective gave both positive and negative responses. Positive responses included the clear, understandable information and the quality of the material. They also mentioned they experienced no particular problems.

In spite of rating the training somewhat favorably, some officials mentioned some criticisms of the training, including software and computer issues, too much information at one time, no materials or software at the session, not having their questions answered and no hands on training. These comments most probably refer to problems with PASERWARE training.

Table 8.1. Reasons for Effectiveness Rating of PASER Training

Reasons for Effectiveness Rating	
- Among Those Who Said Training Was Somewhat Effective -	
Clear information	23%
Software / computer issues	24
Confusing / too much at once	12
No problems experienced	11
No materials / software at session	9
Unresolved questions	7
No hands on training	6
Good materials	6

While most people found the sessions effective, those who did not find it effective typically cited the amount of material covered, computer and software issues, a lack of materials at the sessions, and instructors that were not knowledgeable. Improvement in these areas may help the sessions in general, again noting that many people may be confusing PASER training with PASERWARE training.

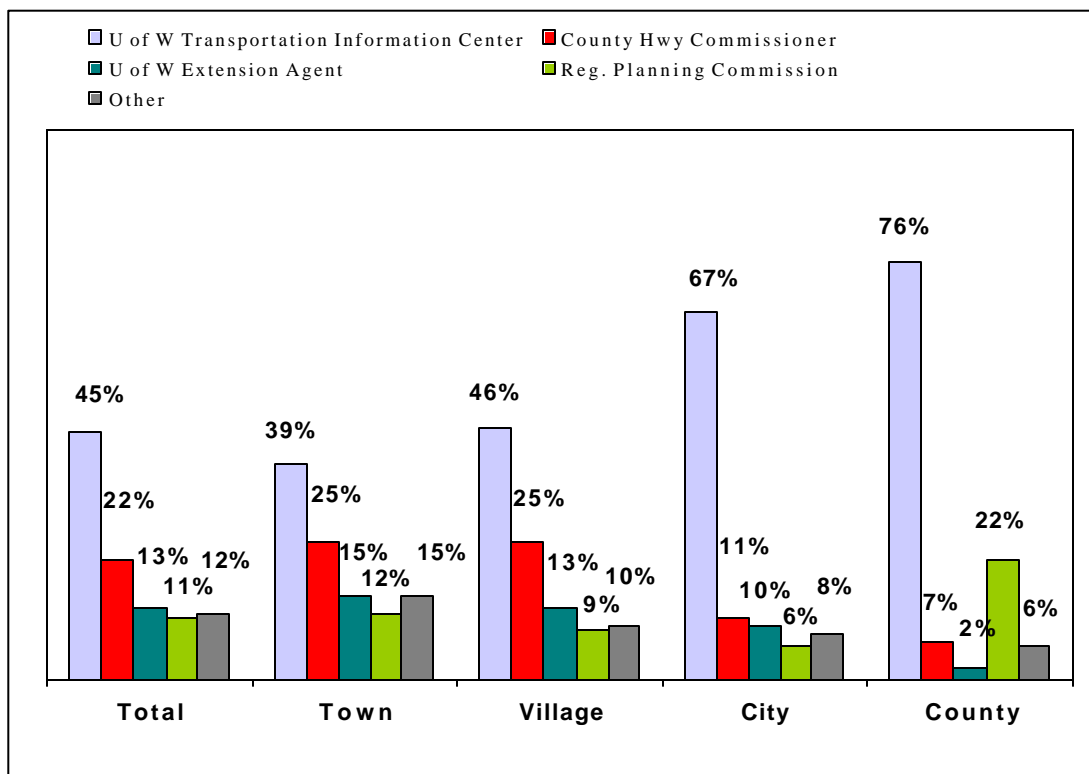
Table 8.2. Reasons for Effectiveness Rating of PASER Training

Reasons for Effectiveness Rating	
- Among Those Who Said Training Was Not Very + Not at All Effective -	
Confusing / too much at once	21%
Software / computer issues	20
No materials / software at session	16
Instructor not knowledgeable	13

Source of Training

Most frequently, representatives of the localities received their training from the U of W Transportation Information Center. Most county and city representatives received their training from UWTIC. Town and Village representatives received their training from a wider variety of sources, including their county highway commissioner. This was especially true for Town Chairmen (31%) and Village Presidents (35%).

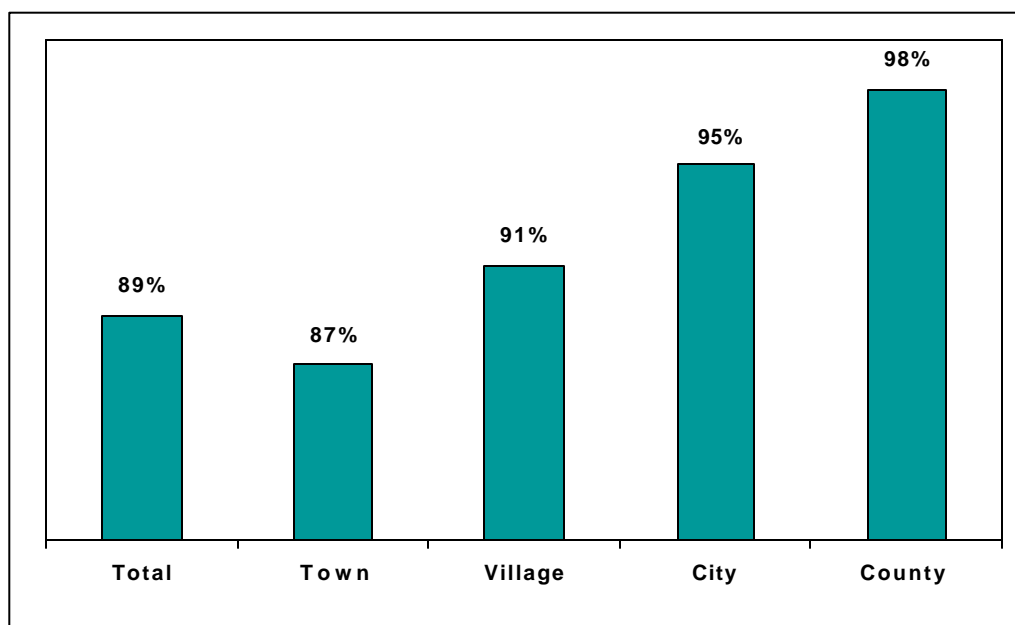
Table 8.3. Source of Training



For the most part (89%), locality representatives indicated they had sufficient information to comply with the new reporting requirement. Town representatives (87%) were least likely to say they had sufficient information.

Those who said they needed additional information most frequently mentioned the requirement was confusing, they did not completely understand the rating criteria or they had computer or software problems.

Graph 8.4. Had Sufficient Information to Comply with Reporting Requirement



Chapter 9: Ease of Compliance

During the qualitative research, several participants suggested the ease of compliance was a key factor in gaining the cooperation of local municipalities.

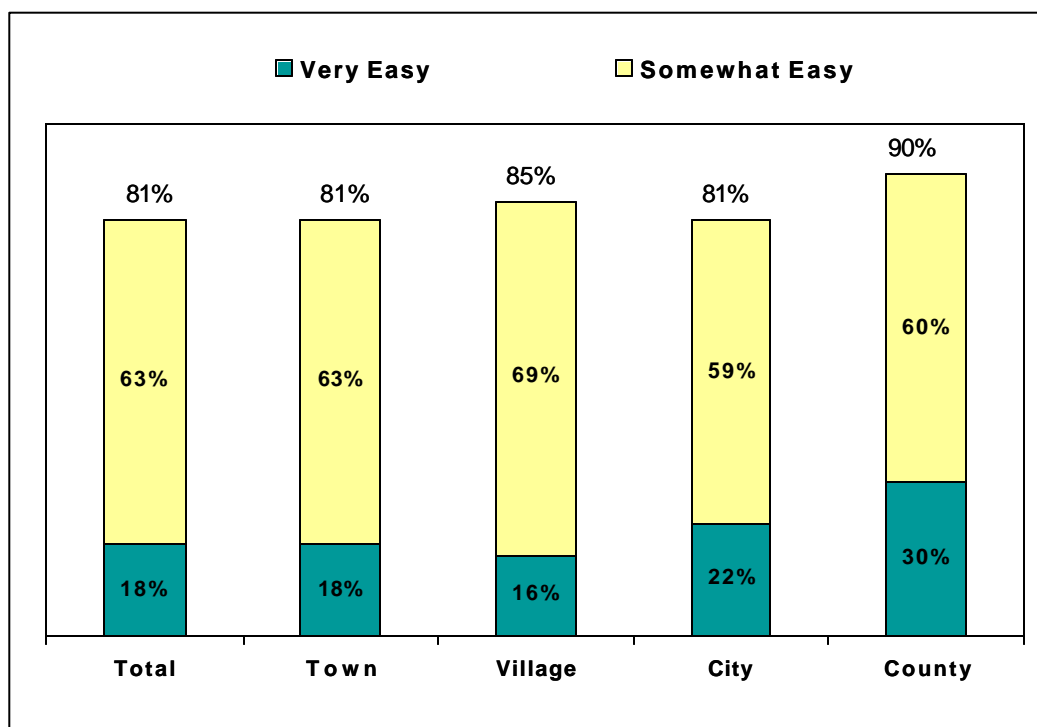
“I think in general it’s a fairly easy process. All of the towns that I’m aware of in the region and the municipalities at the very least go out each year and take a ride around on the roads and try and decide what they need to do. So to put the requirement to rate that on a scale to 1-10 like a movie, it wasn’t that difficult for those folks to do that.”

This perception was supported by the results to the quantitative study. Most local officials found it easy to comply with the new reporting regulations. More than 8 out of 10 (81%) responded that compliance was either “very” or “somewhat” easy. This appears to be an important factor behind the success of the program.

City Engineers and County Highway Commissioners tended to say it was very easy to comply with the regulation. Town Chairmen, Clerks, and Directors of Public Works tended to rate the process as only somewhat easy.

Those people who did not find it easy are less likely to comply in the future, although this accounts for a small percentage of the overall sample. Almost half of the respondents who say they may not comply in the future said it was not very or not at all easy to comply.

Graph 9.1. Ease of Compliance
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Easy -



When asked why it was easy to comply, over one-third of city and county representatives indicated they had rated the roads in the past. This was true of less than 20% of the representatives of towns and villages.

Many people believed the process was easy and there was good information. Finally, some town and village representatives thought the process was easy because they either hired it out or had help from people outside the municipality.

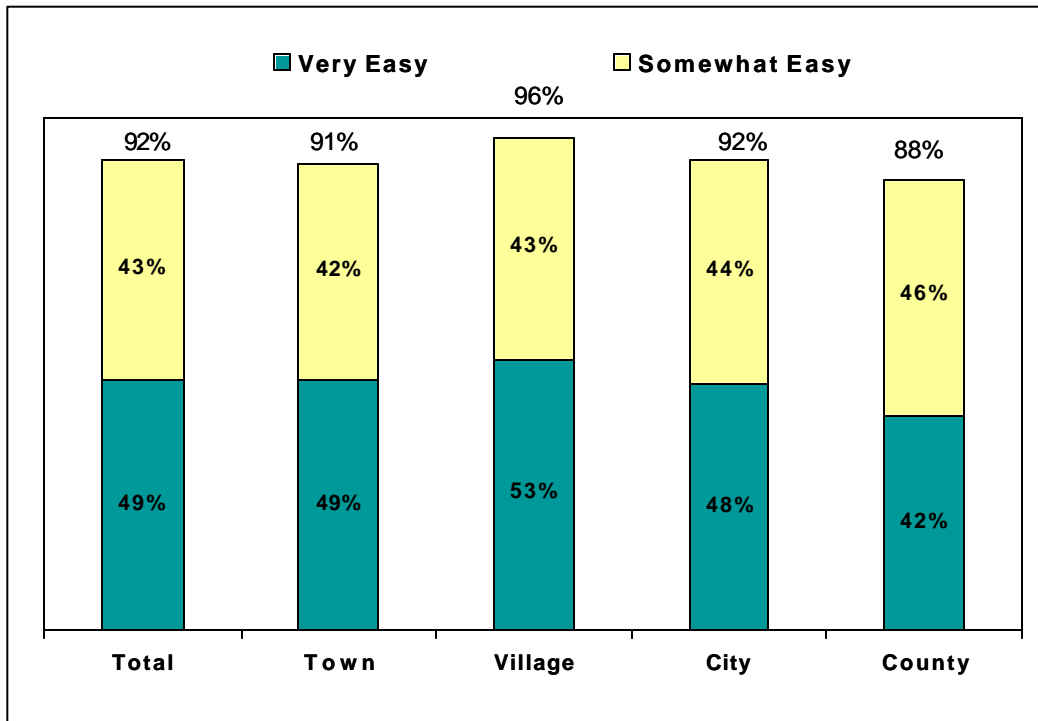
The table below refers only to people who felt it was somewhat or very easy to comply with the regulation. Those people who did not feel it was easy to comply gave a variety of answers. The only response that came up multiple times was that the process took up extra time and was extra work. Few people mentioned technical difficulties in complying with the regulation.

Table 9.1. Why was it Easy to Comply?

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Had done it before / Information was there	21	18	17	36	41
Easy process / good information	20	19	19	16	25
Had help / hired it out	13	16	11	7	0
Other	13	13	19	8	12

Similarly, most officials reported it was “easy” to send the rating information to DOT. In total, 92% said it was “very” or “somewhat” easy to send the information. Counties were least likely to report that it was easy to send the information. Still, 88% agreed it was easy to send the information.

Graph 9.2. Ease of Sending Rating Information to WisDOT
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Easy -



While a majority (66%) of municipalities completed the pavement ratings using local paid employees of the municipalities, many used employees of other municipalities (16%), or outside consultants (13%). This confirms the observation of a few key stakeholders who mentioned the practice of counties conducting the ratings on behalf of the towns and villages in their county.

Municipalities that used their own employees to rate their roads were relatively more likely to say they would do so again in the future. Those who used employees of other municipalities, outside consultants, or their regional planning commission were relatively more likely to say they are only somewhat likely or not likely to comply again in the future.

Table 9.2. Personnel Involved in Rating of Roads

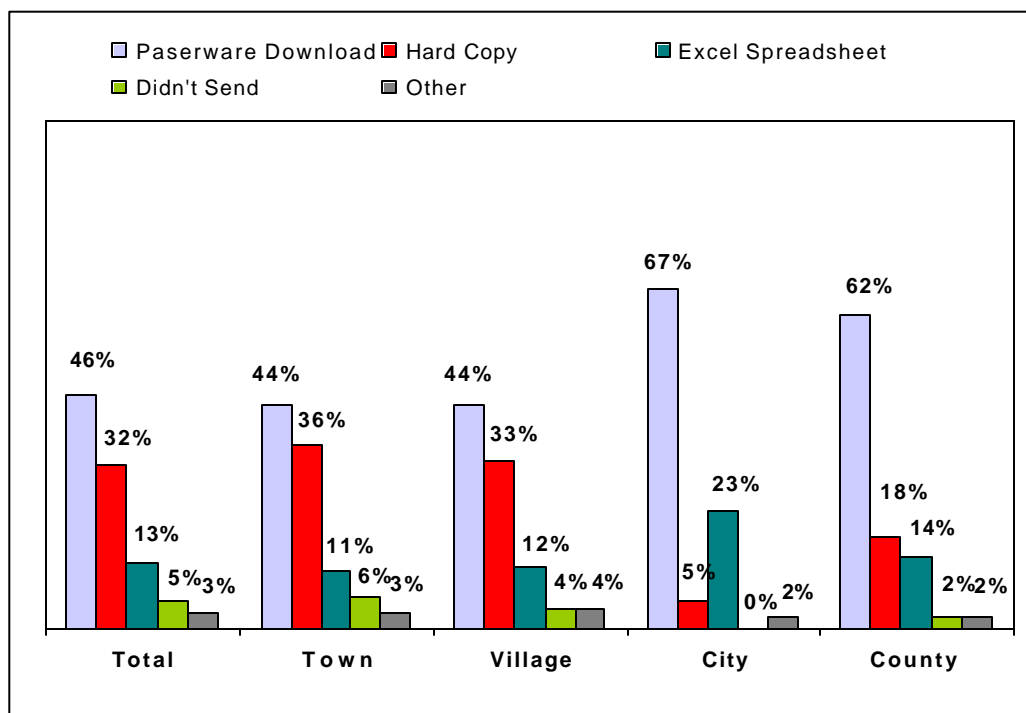
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Local paid employee	66	59	80	85	86
Employees of other municipalities	16	20	6	1	12
Outside consultants	13	13	15	18	4
Reg. planning commission	5	7	3	3	2
Mentioned specific position	19	24	10	3	2

Note: Multiple responses possible.

The most common method for transmitting information to WisDOT was via PASER download (46%). About one third (32%) claimed they sent a hard copy, and 13% said they sent an excel spreadsheet.

Over 60% of city and county representatives said they sent the information via a PASER download. The same is true of less than half of village and town representatives. Few city and county representatives send a hard copy.

Graph 9.3. Method Used to Send Information to WisDOT

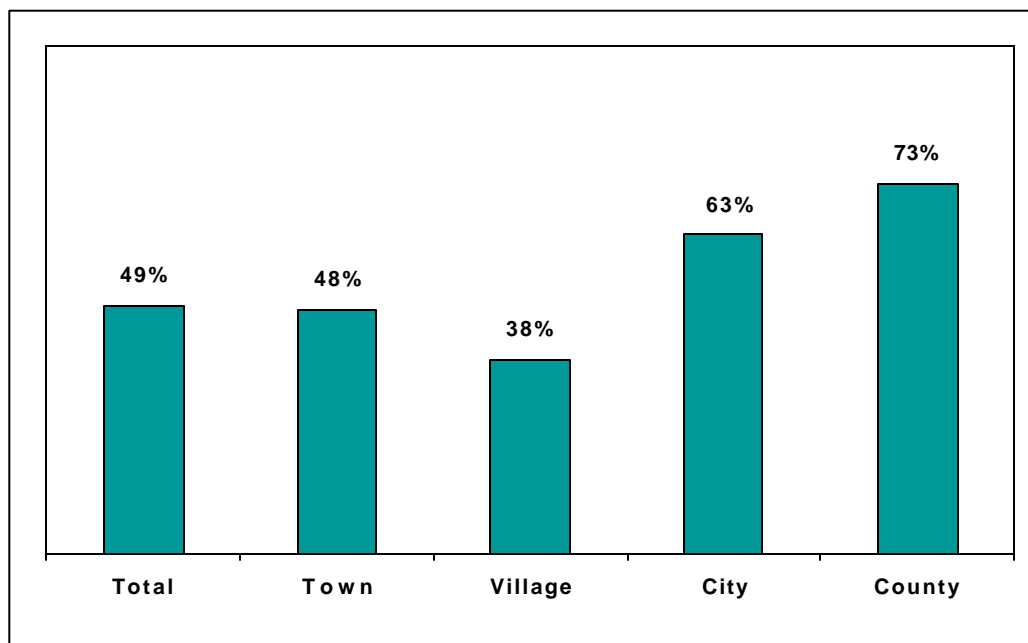


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Over 60% of city and county representatives said they sent the information via a PASER download. The same is true of less than half of village and town representatives. Few city and county representatives send a hard copy.

About one-half (49%) rated their local roads in some way prior to the regulation. This was true of the majority of counties (73%) and cities (63%), but less than half of towns (48%) and villages (38%).

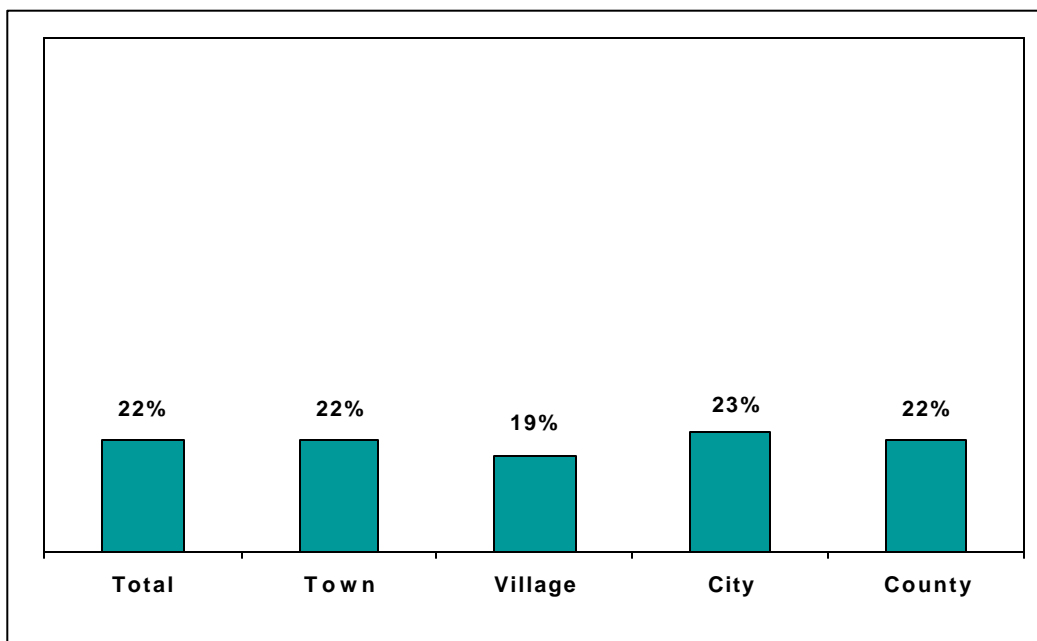
Graph 9.4. Municipality Rated Pavement on Local Roads Prior to Regulation



About one-half (49%) rated their local roads in some way prior to the regulation. This was true of the majority of counties (73%) and cities (63%), but less than half of towns (48%) and villages (38%).

Among those who rated their local roads prior to the new regulation, nearly one-fourth (22%) reported some difficulty converting their information to the new regulation. This pattern holds true regardless of the type of locality.

Graph 9.5. Difficulty in Converting the Information to the New Regulation



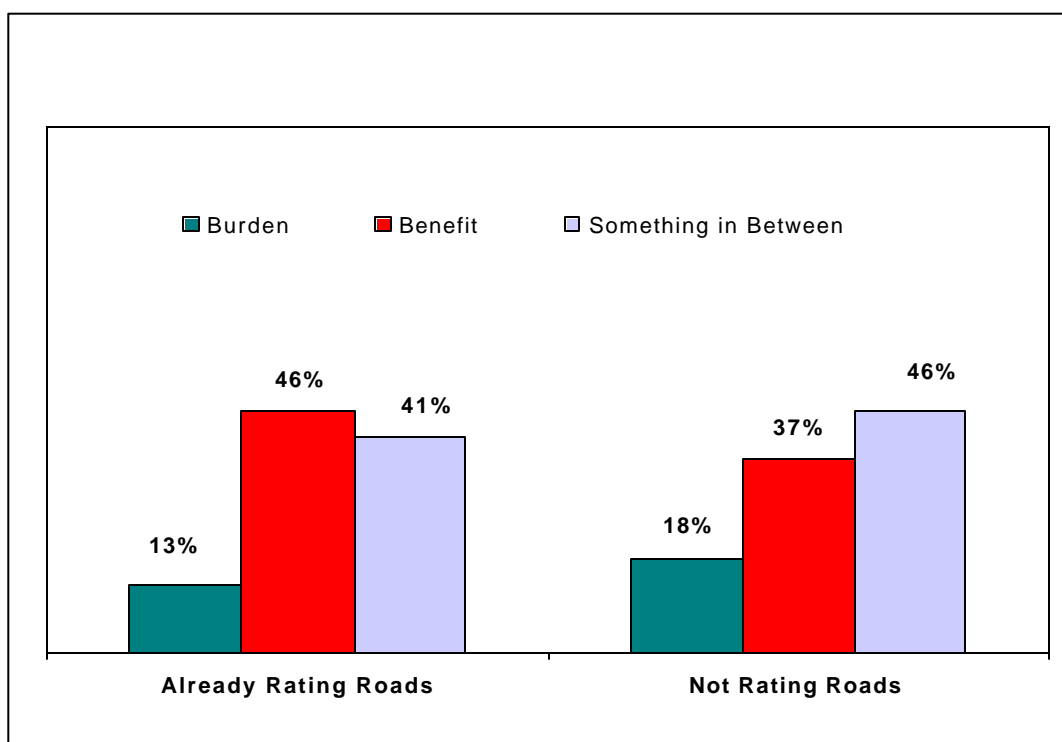
Based on those whose municipalities rated roads prior to the regulation.

Those who already rate the conditions of their local roads are more likely to recognize benefits of the new regulation than those who do not currently rate their roads. Among those not rating their roads prior to the new regulation, 18% view the new regulation as a burden. In contrast, only 13% of those already rating their roads view the new regulation as a burden.

This difference probably stemmed from several sources. The more experience with rating roads, the less of a “hassle” it was and the more the localities recognized the benefit of the process. Additionally, it may be that those already rating the roads in their locality wanted it to become a state regulation, and may even have worked to make it a state requirement.

Graph 9.6. Perception of New Regulation

- Those Already Rating Local Roads Compared to Those Not Already Rating Local Roads



Chapter 10. Overall Communication Needs

The final section looks beyond the Local Roads Pavement Ratings program to communication in general.

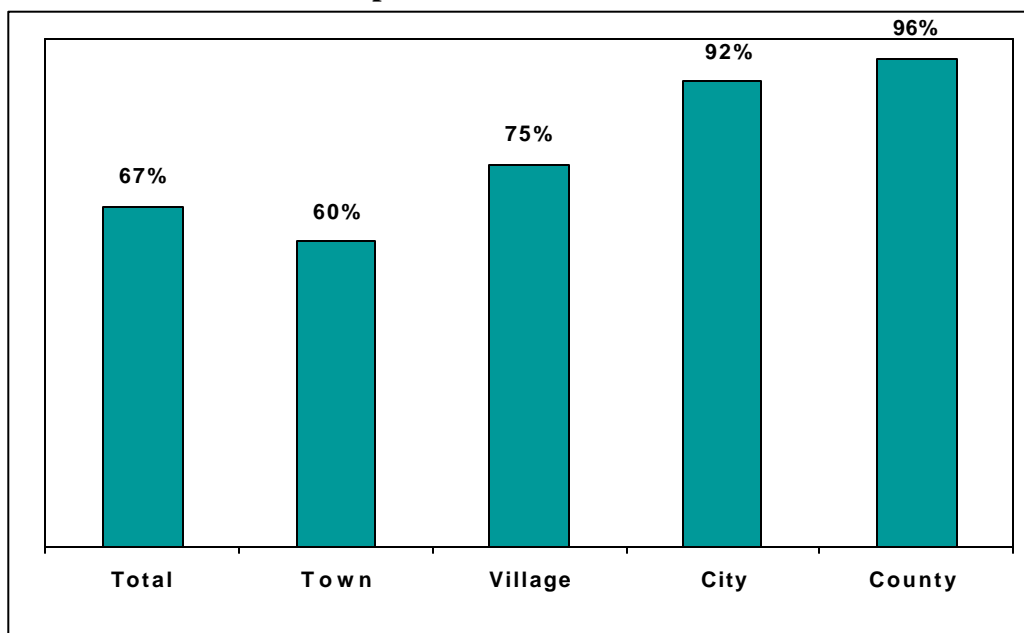
In the in-depth interviews, there was little consensus on any one type of communication as being most effective. However, several stakeholders did say local meetings and state-wide conferences are excellent ways to spread information.

Access to E-Mail

E-mail is a viable way of communicating with up to two-thirds of municipal representatives – one third of municipal representatives lack access to e-mail all together. Towns (60%) are least likely to have access to e-mail, while most county (96%) and city (92%) representatives have e-mail access. At 75%, villages fall between these two extremes.

Interestingly, clerks (75%) are far more likely to have access to e-mail than do Town Chairmen (51%) or Village Presidents (55%). Almost all Directors of Public Works (86%), City Engineers (90%), and county Highway Commissioners (97%) say they have access to e-mail.

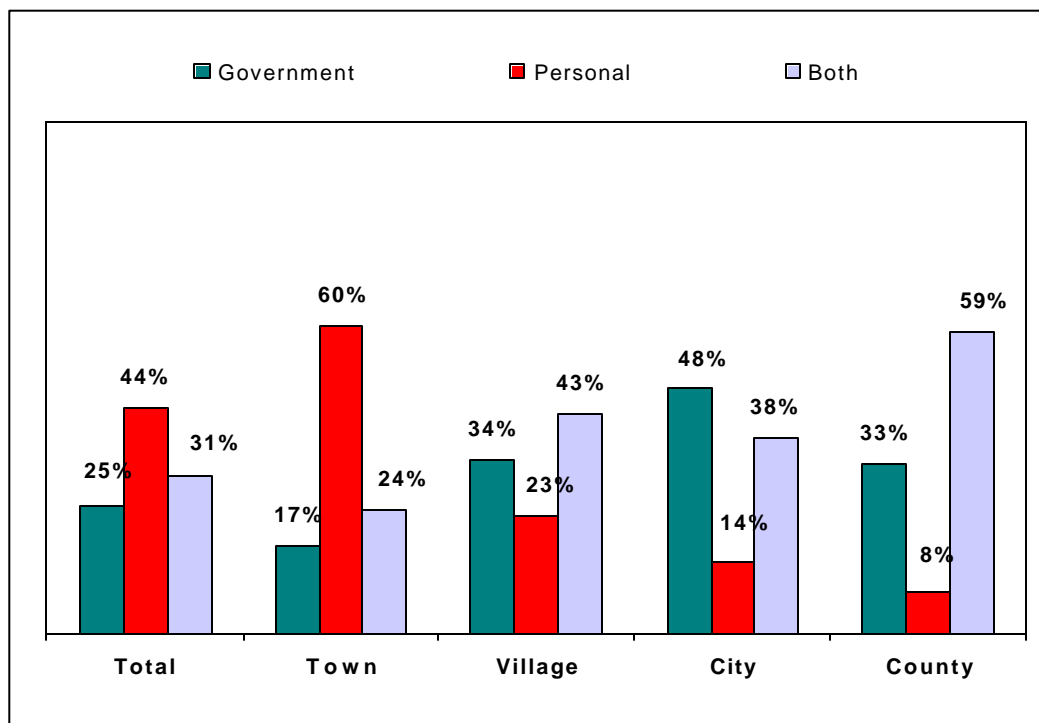
Graph 10.1. Access to E-mail



A little over one-half (56%) of locality representatives who have access to e-mail have access to a government e-mail account (31% have both a government and personal account, and 25% have just a government account).

Town officials are least likely to have access to a government account ; only 41% of town officials who have access to e-mail do so through a government account. The same is true of 77% of village officials, 86% of city officials, and 92% of county officials.

Graph 10.2. Type of E-mail Account

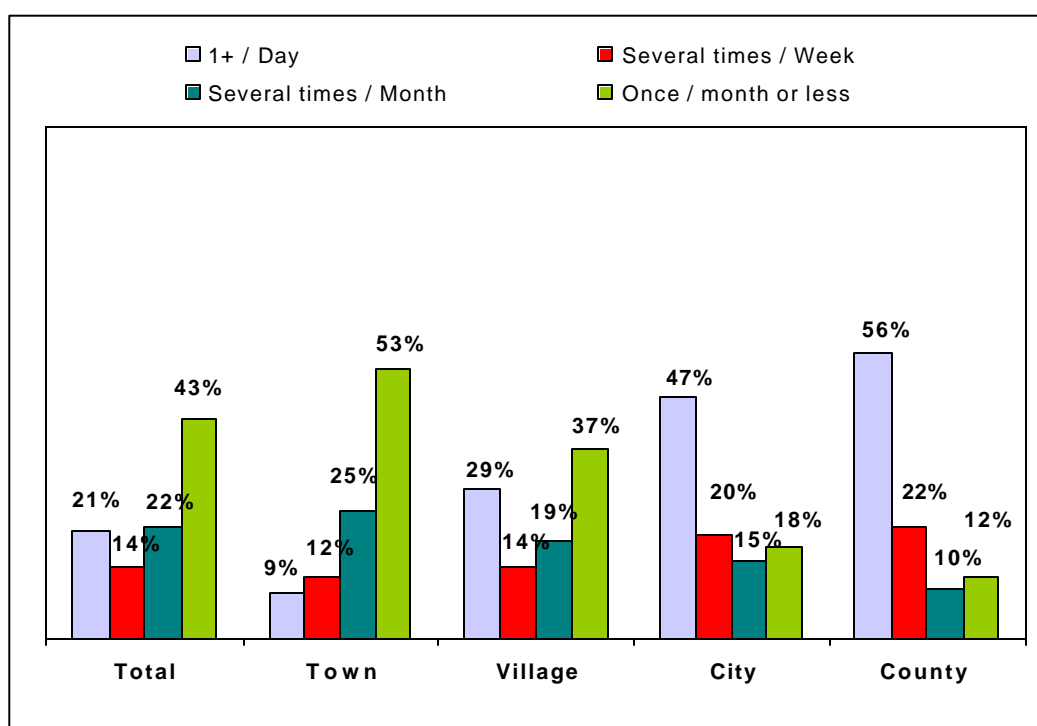


Based on those who have access to e-mail.

Counties and cities communicate by e-mail more frequently than do villages and towns. Over half of the county representatives who have access to e-mail (56%) communicate with it at least once a day. Similarly, city representatives with access to e-mail frequently communicate by e-mail at least once a day (47%). Only 9% of town officials with access to e-mail and 29% of village officials with access to e-mail communicate in this way about government business at least once a day. This does not include those municipalities that lack access to e-mail all together.

When we look at positions, we see that most County Highway Commissioners (89%) communicate by e-mail about government business several times per week or more. City Engineers and Directors of Public Works also tend to communicate via e-mail on a regular basis.

Graph 10.3. Frequency of Using E-mail to Communicate about Government Business

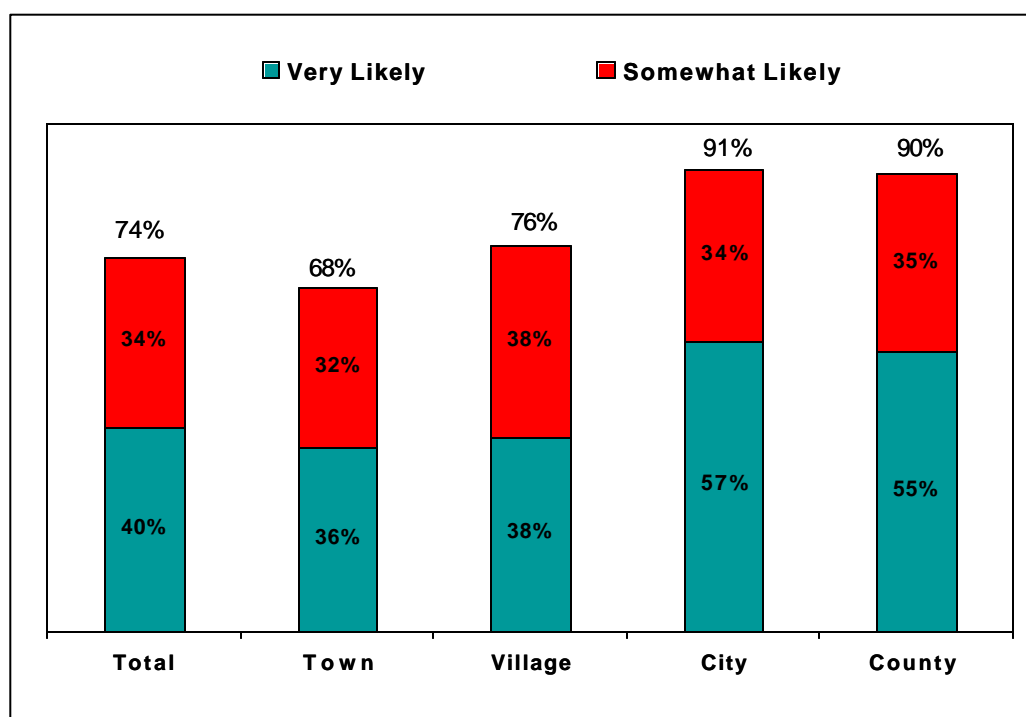


Based on those who have access to e-mail.

Respondents were asked whether they would look for information about rules and regulations on the Internet if they knew it existed on agency websites.

In total, about three-quarters of all municipal representatives said they would be at least somewhat likely to view such information on-line, including most representatives of cities (91%) and counties (90%).

**Graph 10.4. Likelihood of Using Internet
If Information about Rules and Regulation Provided Online
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Likely -**



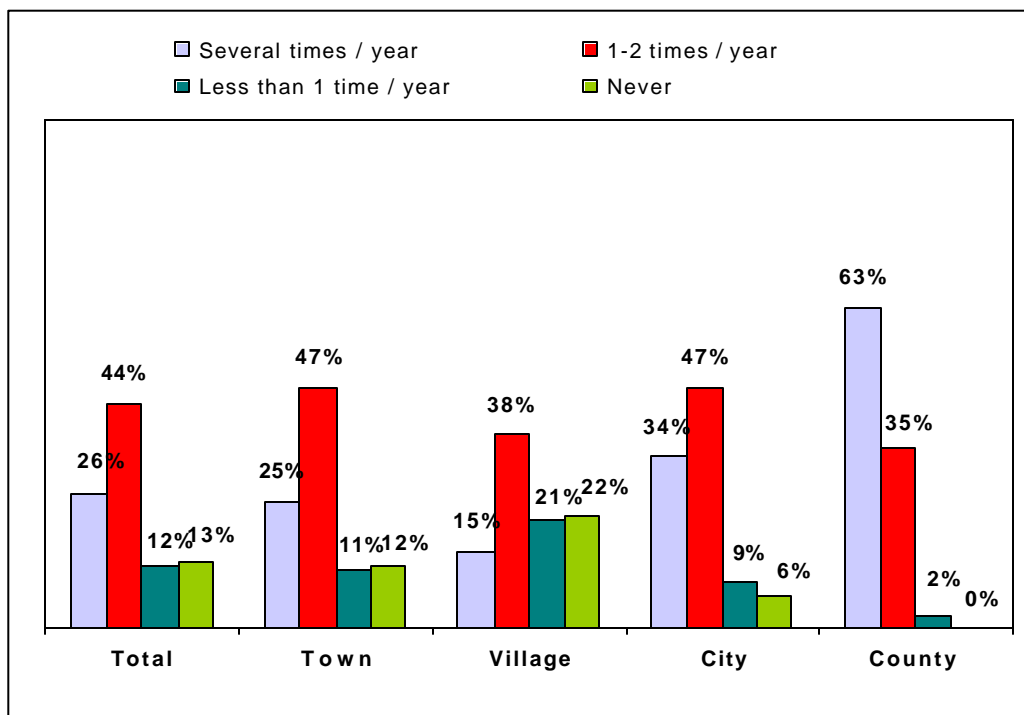
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Statewide Conferences

The majority of localities send representatives to statewide conferences. Two-thirds (70%) attend a statewide conference at least 1-2 times a year. Counties are particularly likely to send local representatives to multiple statewide conferences; 63% of counties send someone to statewide conferences several times a year. Villages are the least likely to attend conferences on a regular basis; only 53% of village representatives attend even one conference a year.

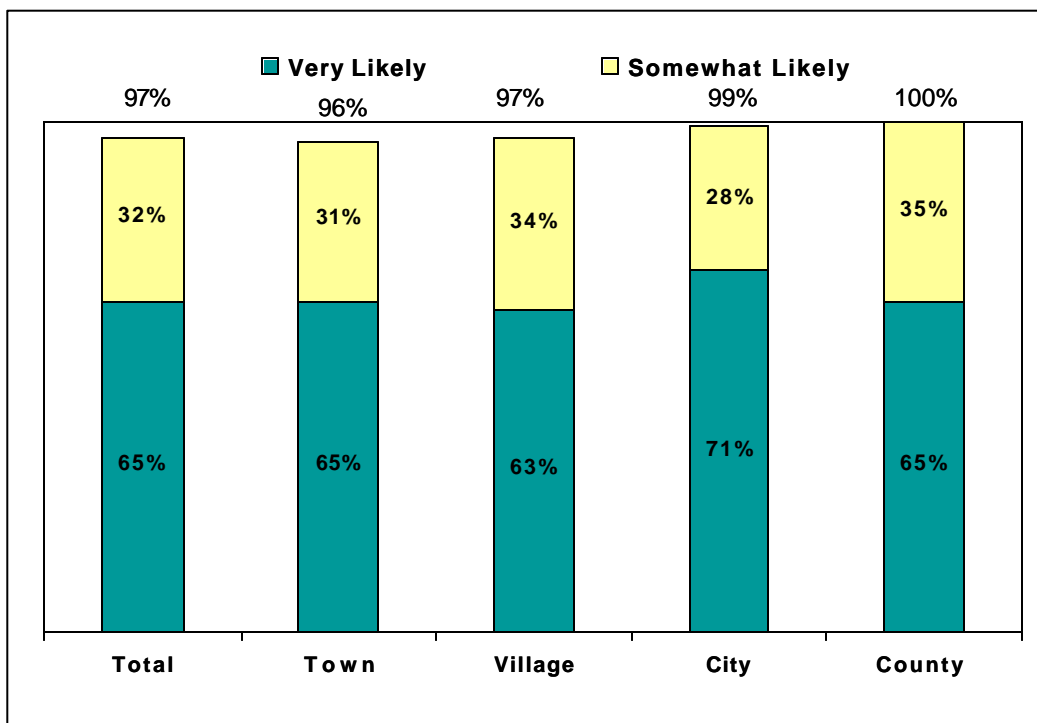
Graph 10.5. Frequency of Community Attending Statewide Conferences



WisDOT Newsletter

A newsletter from WisDOT would be an effective means of reaching local representatives, regardless of the position or type of municipality. Nearly all (97%) said they would be either “very” or “somewhat” likely to read a newsletter from WisDOT.

Graph 10.6. Likelihood of Reading a Newsletter from WisDOT
- Proportion Very + Somewhat Likely -

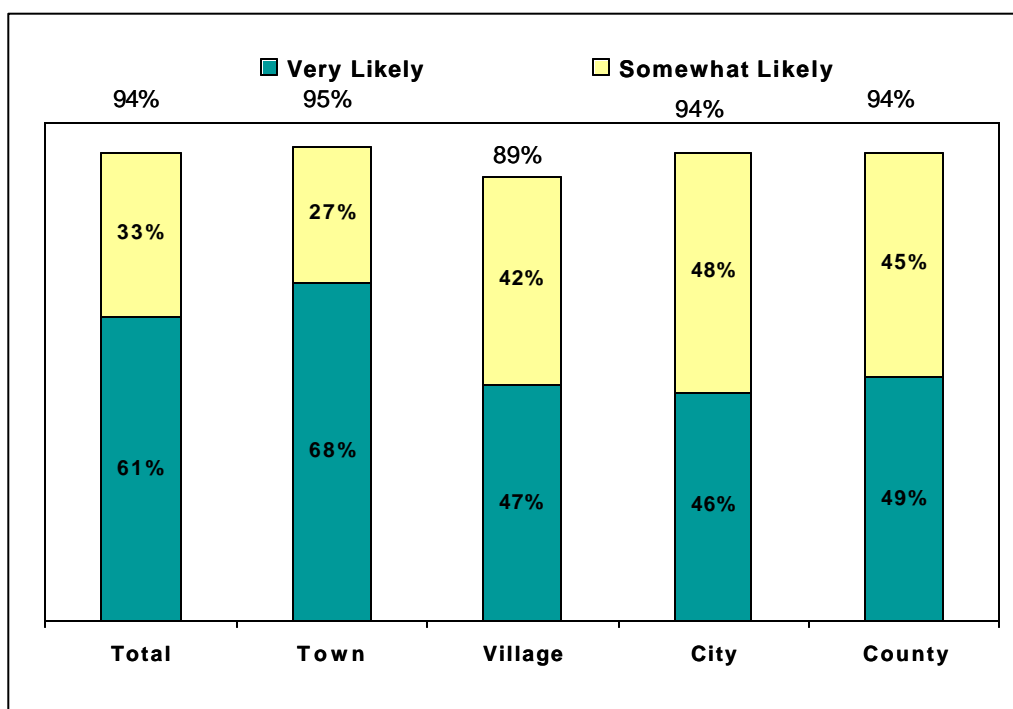


Association Newsletters and Magazines

Representatives indicated they are also likely to read magazines and newsletters distributed by their associations (94%). However, they did say that articles in these magazines and newsletters regarding the new rating requirements were generally less important than other forms of communication.

Most respondents said they are at least somewhat likely to read association magazines and newsletters. Representatives of towns are more likely to say they are very likely to read these publications than are representatives of cities, counties, and villages; over two-thirds of town representatives say they would be very likely to read magazines and newsletters produced by their association.

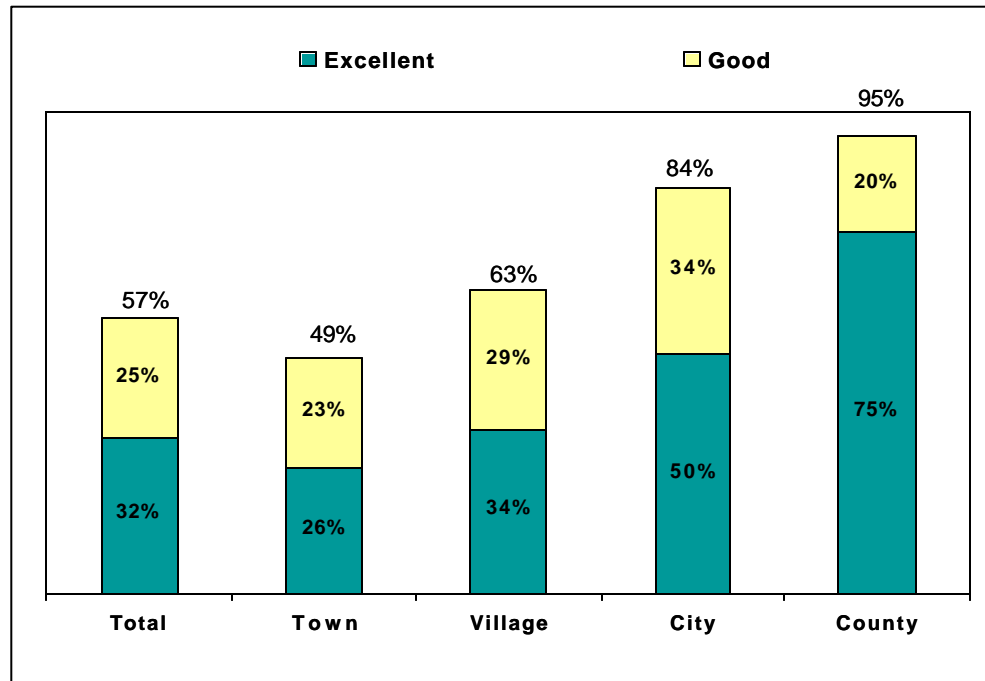
Graph 10.7. Likelihood of Reading Magazines and Newsletters Produced by Your Association - Proportion Very + Somewhat Likely -



Communicating Information about New Rules and Requirements

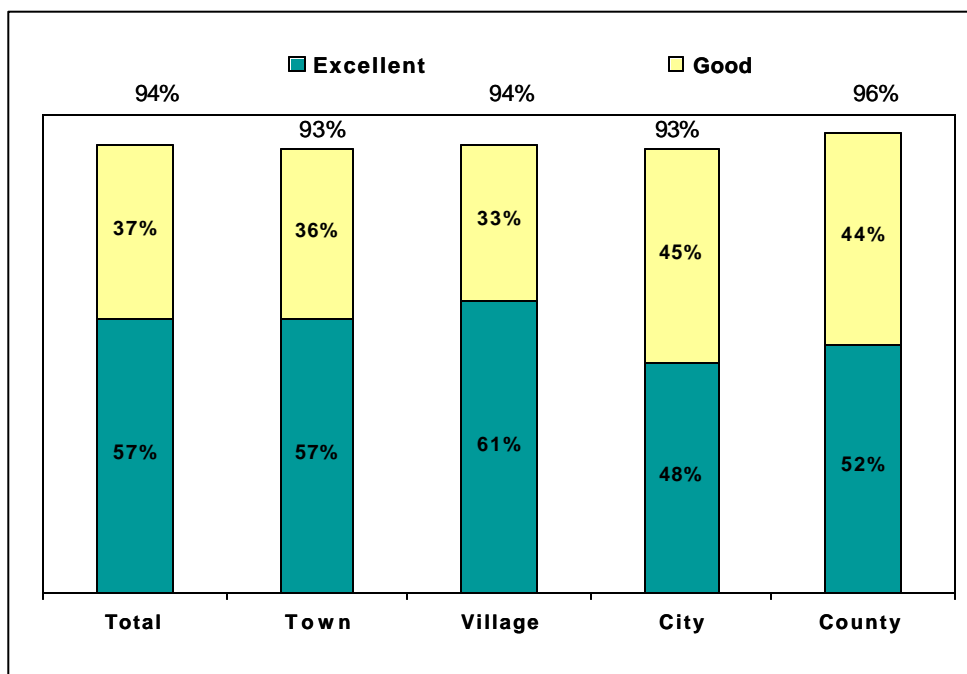
Direct e-mail could be an effective way of providing information about new programs, rules or requirements, particularly with some types of localities. While only 57% said direct mail would be an “excellent” or “good” way to provide information, 95% of county representatives and 84% of city representatives said e-mail would be effective.

Graph 10.8. Rating of Direct E-mail as a Way of Providing Information about New Programs, Rules or Requirements - Proportion Excellent + Good -



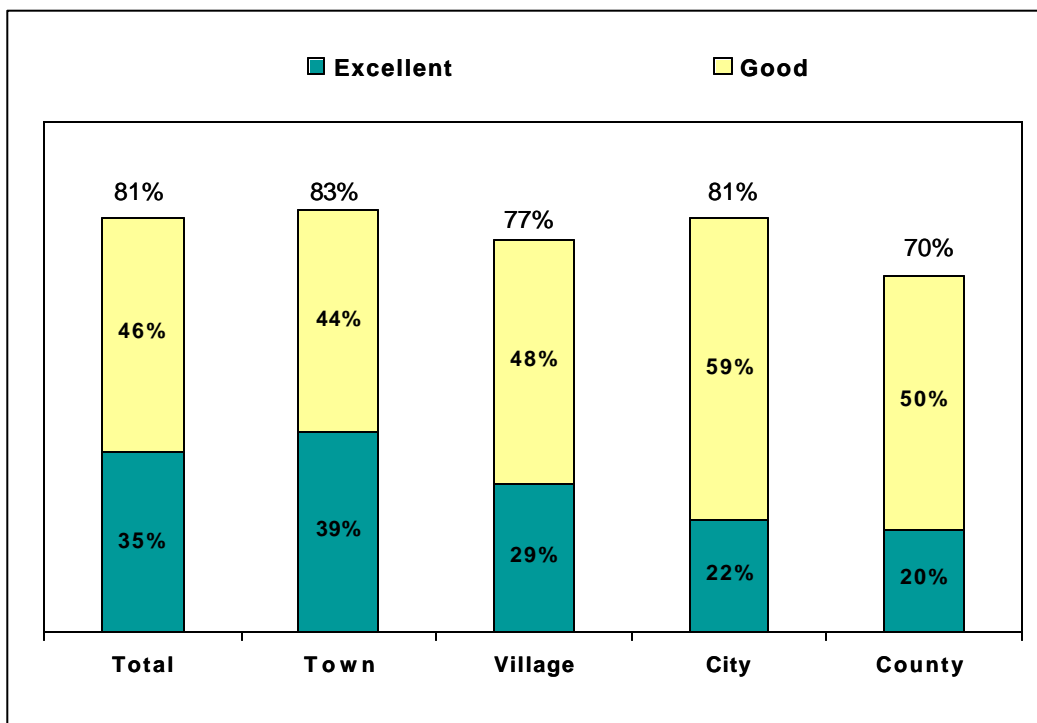
Letters sent by mail are an effective means of reaching all types of localities. In total, 94% said letters by mail are an “excellent” or “good” way of providing information. This pattern is consistent across all locality sizes.

Graph 10.9. Rating of Letters as a Way of Providing Information about New Programs, Rules or Requirements - Proportion Excellent + Good -



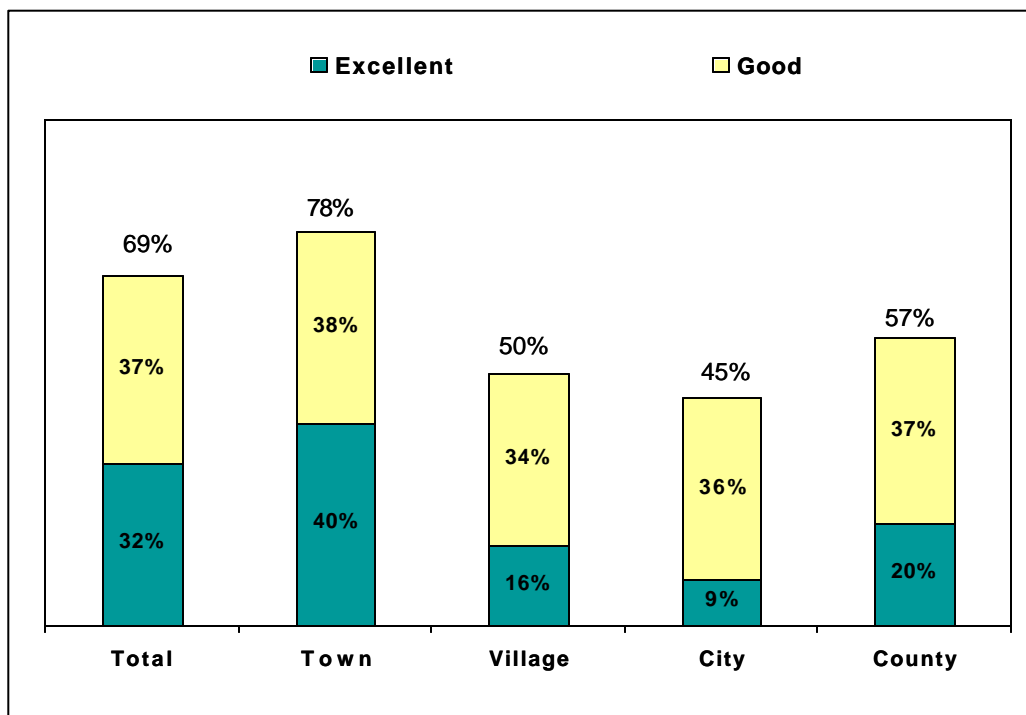
Newsletters could be used most effectively to inform towns (83%) and cities (81%) about new programs, rules or requirements. County representatives are more likely to prefer other means of communication.

Graph 10.10. Rating of Newsletters as a Way of Providing Information about New Programs, Rules or Requirements - Proportion Excellent + Good -



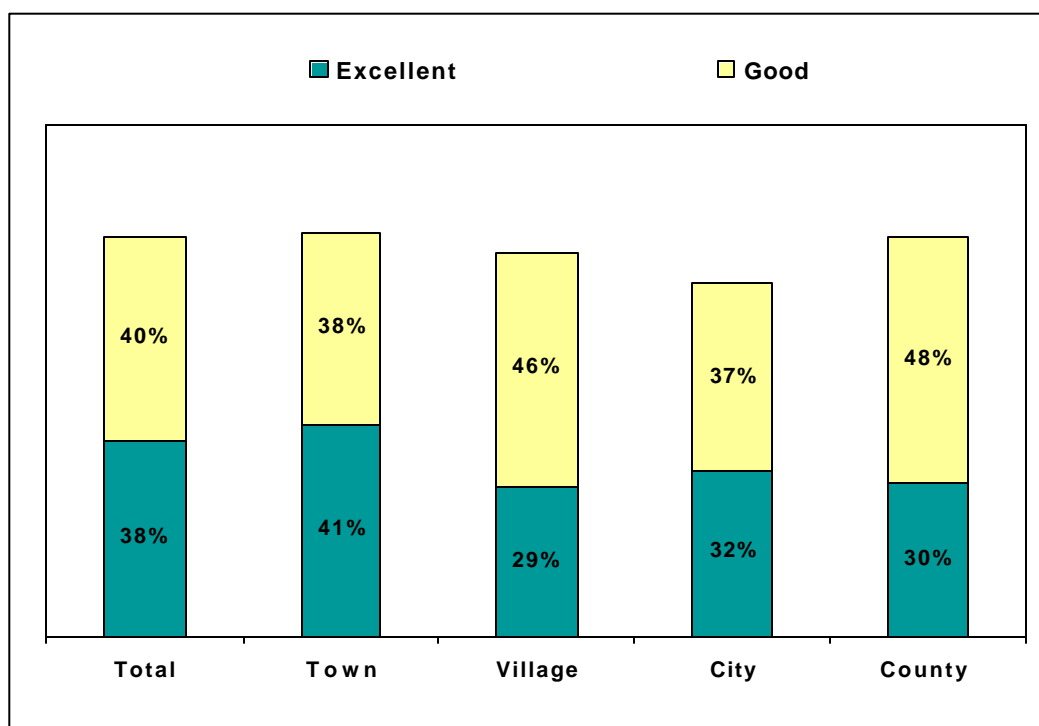
While association newsletters and magazines are not rated as highly as some other means of communication (69% rate them as good or excellent), they could be used effectively to communicate to town representatives (78%) regarding new programs, rules or requirements. Other types of municipal representatives are less likely to prefer this method for obtaining information on new programs, rules, and requirements.

Graph 10.11. Rating of Articles in Association Newsletters or Magazines as a way of Informing about New Programs, Rules or Requirements
- Proportion Excellent + Good -



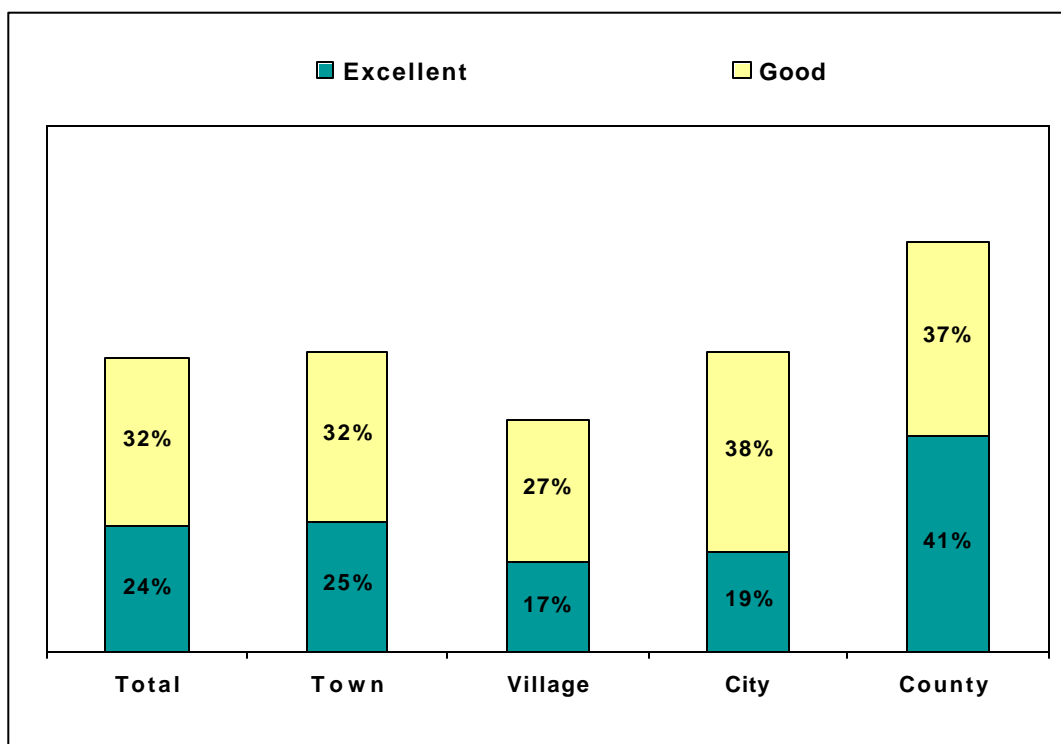
Local meetings could effectively reach about three-fourths (78%) of the localities. Only cities are less likely to find this form of communication effective. As we saw throughout the survey, local meetings were a crucial component of the communications about the Local Roads and Streets Pavement Rating Program.

Graph 10.12. Rating of Meetings of Local Municipalities as a Way of Providing Information about New Programs, Rules or Requirements
- Proportion Excellent + Good -



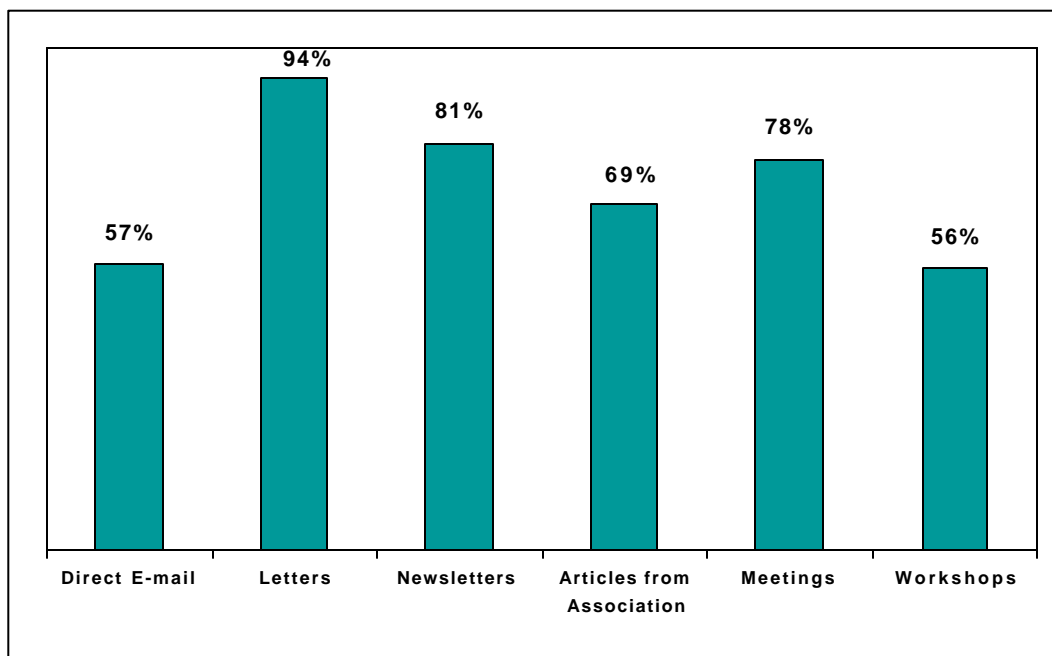
Workshops at conferences would be an effective means of communicating about programs, rules and requirements with only about half (56%) of localities, although they are rated favorably by 78% of county representatives. Village representatives, more than any other municipal group, prefer not to rely on this method. This is consistent with the finding that county officials typically attend multiple statewide conferences each year, while village officials often do not attend any conferences at all.

Graph 10.13. Rating of Workshops at Statewide Conferences as a Way of Providing Information about New Programs, Rules or Requirements
- Proportion Excellent + Good -



Overall, letters (94%) are rated most favorably as a means of informing localities about new programs, rules and requirements. As shown in the preceding graphs, the success of other forms of communication depends on the audience; cities and counties tend look favorably on Email and workshops at conferences. Towns are more likely to get information from their association newsletter and local meetings.

Graph 10.14. Rating of Methods of Providing Information: Summary
- Proportion Excellent + Very Good -
-- Total Sample --



Best Methods of Communication

As we have seen, direct mail is still the preferred method of communication for a majority of municipalities on a wide range of topics. Nearly two-thirds (62%) say direct mail is the best way to communicate information regarding new rules and requirements.

E-Mail has become the preferred method of communication for over half of all county officials. The same is true for nearly 40% of city representatives, but less than one-quarter of town or village representatives.

For many town representatives, articles in association newsletters, or in a WisDOT newsletter, are highly effective methods for communicating this information.

Table 10.1. Best Method for Communicating Information Regarding New Rules or Requirements

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Mail	62	62	74	52	37
E-Mail	22	18	24	39	51
Newsletters	18	21	13	15	8
Articles in association newsletter	15	21	5	2	6
Workshops at statewide conferences	5	6	2	2	10

For construction updates, direct mail is still the method of choice for most town and village officials. However, city and county representatives often prefer e-mail for obtaining this information. Once again, many town officials would prefer learning updates through an association newsletter.

Construction updates are not the type of information that would be addressed at local meetings, or through telephone calls.

Table 10.2. Best Method for Communicating Information on Construction Updates

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Mail	63	66	66	47	35
E-Mail	26	20	28	46	59
Newsletters	24	27	17	19	10
Announcements at meetings of local municipalities	12	15	6	2	6
Telephone calls	5	5	4	1	6

For meeting updates, we see a similar pattern as for other forms of communication – town and village representatives prefer direct mail, and city and county officials tend to prefer e-mail.

Representatives are not particularly interested in learning about meeting updates through local meetings or telephone calls – the other methods are sufficient for this purpose.

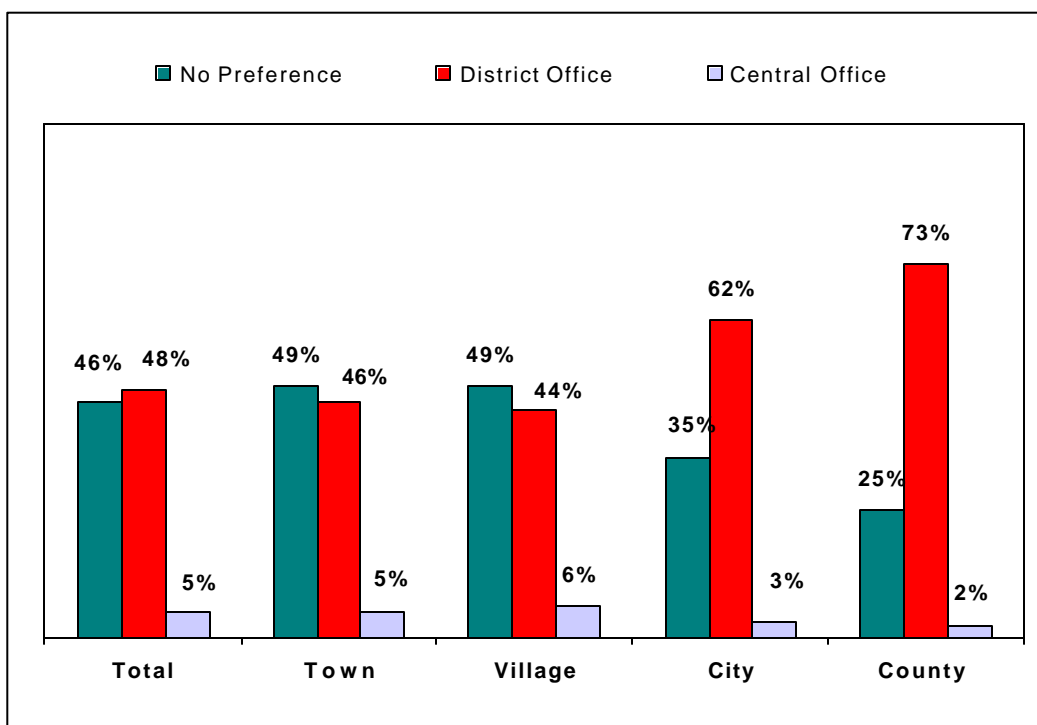
Table 10.3. Best Method for Communicating Information on Meeting Updates

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Town</u>	<u>Village</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>County</u>
	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>	<u>%</u>
Mail	66	69	71	53	29
E-Mail	28	22	30	49	71
Newsletters	20	24	10	15	8
Announcements at meetings of local municipalities	9	12	2	2	2
Telephone calls	4	5	3	2	6

Central versus District Office Communication

Generally, representatives of the localities would prefer DOT contact through a district office than through the central office. In total, 48% would prefer contact with their district office, 5% prefer the central office and 46% have no preference. County representatives (73%) expressed the greatest preference for contact with their district office. Cities (62%) also expressed preference for their district office, while towns and villages were more likely not to have a preference.

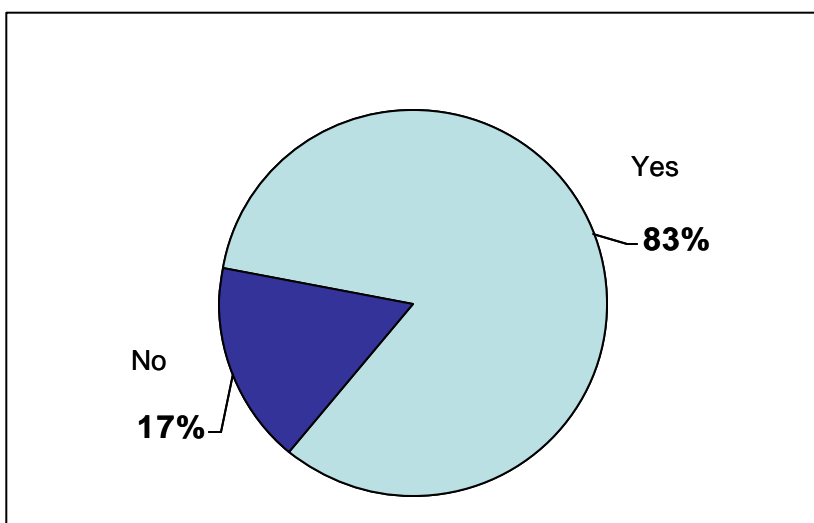
Graph 10.15. Preference for DOT Contact



Appendix A: Profile of Respondents

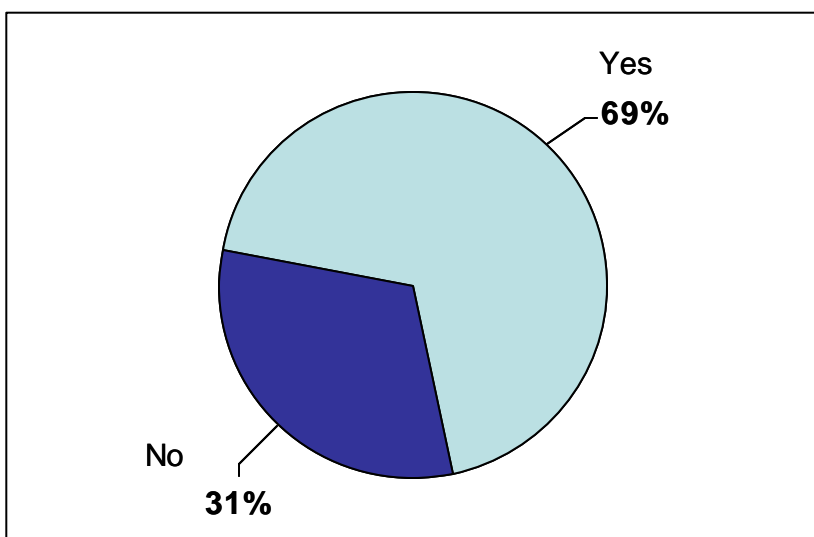
All participants either participated in the decision to conduct comply with the regulation, or actively participated in the actual ratings. Eighty-three percent of respondents had some involvement in the decision regarding how their municipality would conduct the pavement ratings.

Respondent at Least Partly Responsible for Deciding How Pavement Ratings Would Be Done



Nearly 7 out of every 10 respondents (69%) were involved in the actual rating of the roads in their locality.

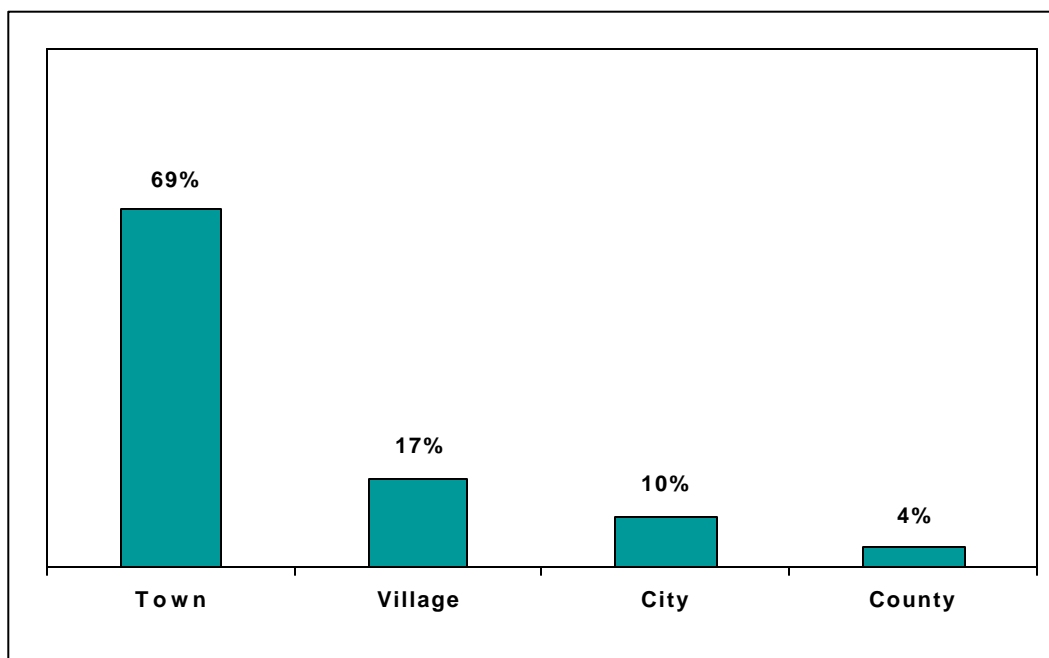
Involvement in Actual Rating of Roads



Type of Locality

About two-thirds of the responses were from towns (69%), which was to be expected given that towns make up the majority of localities throughout the state. Seventeen percent of the responses were from villages 10% were from cities, and 4% from counties (4%). This distribution reflects the distribution of these locality types across Wisconsin.

Type of Locality



Positions of Respondents

Towns - About half (54%) of responses from towns came from the Town Chairman; 29% came from the Town Clerk, and 7% from the Road Superintendent.

Villages – Among village representatives, we received responses most commonly from Directors of Public Works (41%), Village Presidents (25%), and clerks (14%).

Cities – Among cities, the survey was most commonly completed by the Director of Public Works (51%) and the City Engineer (22%). Seven percent came from the Mayors.

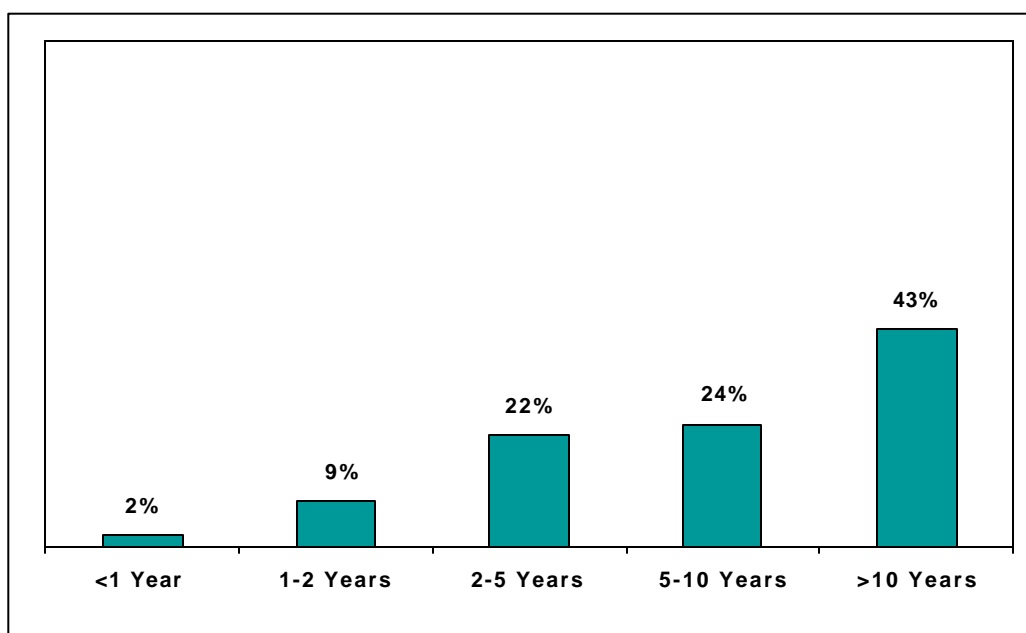
Counties – The majority of responses from counties came from the County Highway Commissioners (75%), others came from superintendents (8%) and engineers working for the counties (8%).

Length of Time in Position

Survey respondents were not new to their positions. More than 4 out of 10 (43%) had been in their positions for more than 10 years. Only 2% had been in their positions less than one year.

Interestingly, county officials were more likely to be relatively new to the job than officials from other municipalities; 46% of responses were from county officials who had been in their current position less than five years; the same is true of about one-third of town, village, and city officials.

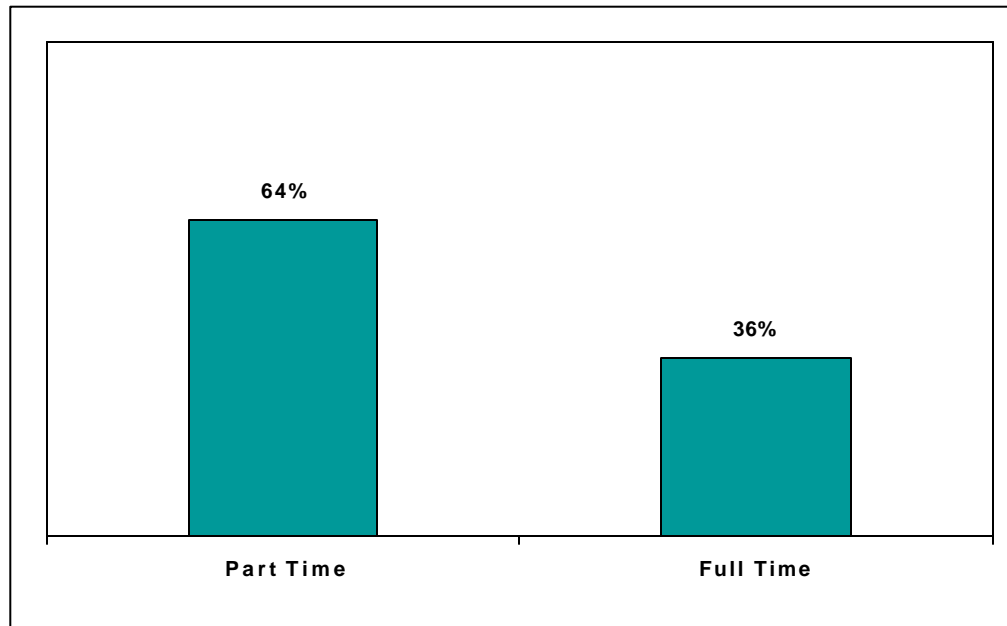
Length of Time in Position



Full time versus Part time

Respondents tended to be from part time (64%) positions, although this is largely a result of the large number of responses from towns. Most town representatives that responded to the survey are part-time (82%). The same is true of 38% of village officials, 6% of city officials, and only 4% of county officials

Type of Position



Appendix B: Matrix of Communications Methods

Direct Mail

Method	Audience	Effect on Pavement Rating Compliance	Future Recommendations
Direct Mail	Counties	Important and useful for both compliance and providing technical information	An essential tool of communications for the foreseeable future.
Direct Mail	Cities	Important and useful for both compliance and providing technical information	An essential tool of communications for the foreseeable future.
Direct Mail	Villages	Very important for both compliance and providing technical information, especially given that the association was not particularly active	An essential tool of communications for the foreseeable future.
Direct Mail	Towns	Important, although not as crucial as for other types of municipalities.	An essential tool of communications for the foreseeable future.

E-Mail

Method	Audience	Effect on Pavement Rating Compliance	Future Recommendations
E-Mail	Counties	Not frequently used	Highly recommended, especially for transmitting relatively simple information.
E-Mail	Cities	Not frequently used	Recommended as an addition to other methods
E-Mail	Villages	Not frequently used	Not enough villages have e-mail for this to be an effective method in the near future.
E-Mail	Towns	Not frequently used	Not enough towns have e- mail for this to be an effective method in the near future.

Association Newsletters and Magazine Articles

Method	Audience	Effect on Pavement Rating Compliance	Future Recommendations
Association Newsletters and Magazine Articles	Counties	Not very important for compliance, but very useful in providing detail and technical information	Can be a moderately important source of information in conjunction with other methods
Association Newsletters and Magazine Articles	Cities	Not very important for compliance, but very useful in providing detail and technical information	Should not be relied upon alone, although may be useful in conjunction with other methods
Association Newsletters and Magazine Articles	Villages	Not very important; association was not a primary source of information for most village representatives	Should not be relied upon alone, although may be useful in conjunction with other methods
Association Newsletters and Magazine Articles	Towns	Important; over two -thirds received information this way, and many found them important for compliance and useful for receiving technical information	A very effective method for reaching town representatives, more than for other types of municipalities

Statewide Conferences

Method	Audience	Effect on Pavement Rating Compliance	Future Recommendations
Statewide Conferences	Counties	Very important for both compliance and providing technical information and details	More than for any other type of municipality, statewide conferences are an effective method for providing information
Statewide Conferences	Cities	Moderately important for both compliance and providing technical information and details	Important and effective for providing information
Statewide Conferences	Villages	Less than half of village officials received any information at a statewide conference	Maybe useful, but less important for villages
Statewide Conferences	Towns	Moderately important for both compliance and providing technical information and details	Moderately important and effective for providing information

Local and Regional Meetings

Method	Audience	Effect on Pavement Rating Compliance	Future Recommendations
Local and Regional Meetings	Counties	Moderately important and useful source of information for both compliance and receiving information	Useful, although somewhat less important than for distributing information to towns and villages
Local and Regional Meetings	Cities	Moderately important and useful source of information for both compliance and receiving information	Useful, although somewhat less important than for distributing information to towns and villages
Local and Regional Meetings	Villages	Very important and useful for receiving technical information, especially without an active association	An important method for distributing information.
Local and Regional Meetings	Towns	Important and useful source of information for both compliance and receiving information	An important method for distributing information.